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SERIES OF LETTERS

FROM

Miss LUCY WHEATLY in Town, to Miss ANNABELL  
GRIERSON in the Country.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

---

VOL. I.

---

"Oh! artless Love, where the Soul moves the Tongue,  
"And only Nature speaks what Nature thinks."

DRYDEN.

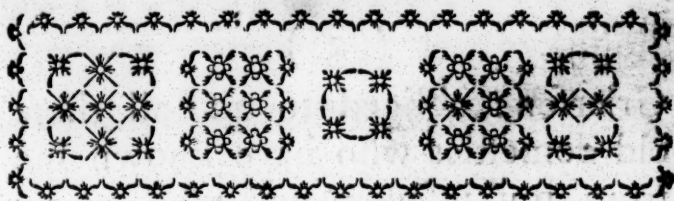
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# LETTERS

FROM

MISS LUCY WHEATLY

IN TOWN,

TO

MISS ANNABELL GRIERSON

IN THE COUNTRY.

---

LETTER THE FIRST.

MISS WHEATLY TO MISS GRIERSON.

*Hill-Street.*



O what I am destined, my dearest Annabell? Obligated to leave that peaceful mansion in which I spent all the happy hours of my life, under the care of the tenderest, the best of mothers, and with the dear companion of my youth, the amiable Miss

VOL. I.

B

Grierson:

Grierson: obliged to quit all those old domestics who have known me from my infancy, and who, many of them, assisted to preserve my life and health to this present time: to give up all my innocent, my tranquil amusements, which, while they diverted my thoughts, kept my spirits in so equal a state, that they were never either too much elevated, or too much depressed. How changed is my situation! how very different does every object which presents itself to my view, appear from those which I left behind me! I cannot yet reconcile myself to the manner of living here; I should say, of spending my time in London. People seem to me to be in a perpetual hurry and confusion from morning to night, about nothing too, of any, the least consequence. They do not pretend to be busy about any thing but pleasure, though, in my opinion, pleasure, when it becomes a serious employment,



ployment, loses both its quality and its name.

Bred in a far different manner, and taught from my earliest days to apply with assiduity to nothing but what would probably contribute to make me serviceable to myself or others, I find myself here the most trifling being in the universe, and of no sort of use in it.

But you insist, my beloved friend, upon a regular account of all that has happened to me since you left Oak-Abbey, (the dear place of my birth) which was, you know, soon after the death of my excellent mother. You remember, my Annabell, that my uncle Mordaunt came down immediately upon that melancholy occasion; and that he was with me when you went to Fair-Grove Manor, to see your grand-mother, upon her being suddenly taken ill,

about ten days before we were to go to London. He brought home to dine with us, one day, two young gentlemen whom he met with in the wood near the Abbey; and who had, I found, missed their way in admiring the beauties of the country round them. He presented them to me when they entered the dining-parlour with him; and though both of them paid their compliments to me in a more polished strain than I had been accustomed to, yet there was a kind of diffidence and timidity in the address of the younger, which seemed more like my own bashful carriage in the company of strangers, and which, perhaps, recommended me more to him than the most assured behaviour would have done; for that very reason, are we not too apt to be pleased with those who are like ourselves: but to convince you that I was not prepossessed in his favour, by that behaviour alone, I  
will



will endeavour to describe him to you more particularly.

He was tall and well-made, and had a grace in performing the most insignificant action, superior to any thing that I had ever seen. His face was oval and manly ; yet there were strongly expressed in it both sweetness and sensibility : his complexion was a lively brown ; his hair a bright chesnut : such was the person of Mr. Wentworth, for so he called himself.

The other gentleman, whose name was Farnham, was between fifty and threescore, and had a genteel appearance : his aspect was serious, but though he had a pair of eyes remarkably penetrating, he was not in the least forbidding.

The account they gave of themselves was, that they came down to



see a part of the county, of which they had heard a very flattering description ; and that being allured by the number of beautiful prospects which they beheld, they had strayed out of their knowledge, when they met with my uncle, who had, they said, most hospitably invited them home.

As they acquitted themselves extremely well in conversation, my uncle was not a little pleased with his accidental rencounter, and insisted upon their being his guests for a few days. They accordingly staid two days with us ; but when my uncle pressed them to make a longer visit, Mr. Farnham, looking severely at his young companion, who seemed to be much inclined to comply with my uncle's invitation, said, " I am sorry, my dear Harry, as well as you, that we cannot comply with Mr. Mordaunt's kind request, but you are sensible that it is not in our power.

When

When they left us, Mr. Farnham took his leave with great civility, but it was very easy to perceive that he left us without any sort of repugnance. The departure from us rather seemed to give him a satisfaction, which he endeavoured, but scarce knew how to conceal. Mr. Wentworth, on the contrary, looked very dejected and unhappy, and appeared to leave the Abbey with great regret.

I am interrupted : my aunt Mor-daunt, who is quite a woman of the world, and would fain make me look a little like one, has this moment sent to let me know that the hair-dresser waits.

Adieu, my dear Annabell, till I am at leisure to resume my pen.—  
Write soon to your ever affectionate

LUCY WHEATLY.

## L E T T E R II.

From the same to the same.

W H E N I had dispatched all the impertinent people who torment me incessantly here, and had leisure to sit down and reflect upon my last letter to my beloved Miss Grierson, I began to think that I had employed myself in writing to very little purpose, by communicating to you what was of no importance to engage your attention, and what was too unimportant to find a place in my memory; but, if you recollect, you enjoined me to be particular in my communications, and in such a positive manner, my dear Annabell, that one would have thought you yourself had some extraordinary reason for so doing. Tell me if you had, my amiable friend, and I will endeavour to satisfy you to the utmost of my power.

I was

I was interrupted, I told you in my last, by the hair-dresser; but neither my aunt, nor a gay lively girl, who is often here, could prevail on me to put myself under his hands. In vain did they urge, peremptorily, the necessity there was for my being curled and powdered; as strenuously did I oppose them, and inveigh against the being obliged to make so unnatural an appearance, only to comply with a ridiculous fashion; and told them, that as my hair was of a tolerable good brown, which I thought became my complexion, I would never take pains to make it look grey before the time, which would certainly arrive soon enough.

They laughed, as if they were ready to expire at my foolish perverseness, as they called it, and said, that they saw it was impossible to eradicate the rustic notions which I

had imbibed, by being all my days in the neighbourhood of a country village, so many miles from the sight or conversation of any human creature.

I sat quite composed till they had said all they imagined was necessary upon this very interesting subject; and then told them calmly, that if it was absolutely requisite for me to be curled, in order to appear like the rest of the human species, my Amy should perform that office, as I could not think of letting a man touch my head.

They shouted immoderately at my immense prudery, as they termed it; but finding that neither their ridicule, nor their serious persuasions, had the slightest effect upon me, they left me to make what figure I thought proper: and if I may venture to form any judgment of the disposition of

Miss



Miss Blonden, my aunt's lively companion, she did not seem quite so desirous of setting my head right as my good aunt was, who, I really believe, has a regard for me, in her way.

But to return to the place where I was interrupted in my last: while Mr. Farnham and Mr. Wentworth staid at the Abbey, my uncle conducted them to every pleasant spot near us, and we finished the evenings in the park and garden. In the garden, the latter was, on the second evening, left with me, while my uncle was relating to the former a particular history of the remaining part of the old draw-bridge, of which, if you remember, he was always very fond.

As Mr. Wentworth sat by me in the alcove, covered with jessamine, after having expressed his admiration  
of

of the fine romantic situation of the Abbey, he said, " This is a delightful summer retreat, Miss Wheatly, but do you not, continued he, with some hesitation, find the winter evenings now and then dull and tedious?" " I have not yet, Sir, replied I, found them so; for last winter I was happy in the company of the dearest, best of mothers, whom I lost at the beginning of this summer, who was deprived of her senses, by a paralytic stroke for above six weeks before she died."

As you know, my dear Annabell, that I cannot even think on that excellent parent, whose loss I shall ever deplore and sensibly feel, without emotion, you will not wonder that my great sorrow prevented me from expressing myself in so intelligible a manner as I should have done, upon a less affecting occasion. My tears  
flowed

flowed in spite of all my efforts to restrain them.

The young gentleman appeared to be moved with my involuntary, and not-to-be concealed affliction. He fixed his eyes upon me with the most compassionate look imaginable : I even fancied that his eyes were moistened ; he sighed, I am sure ; and taking my hand between his, said, with a gentle tone of voice, “ I am quite unhappy, Miss Wheatly, for having inadvertently uttered any thing to give you pain, by recalling ideas which I sincerely wish it was in my power to banish for ever from your mind : but believe me, Madam, I share your concern ; you appear too much affected by it to suffer ~~me~~ to behold it with indifference.”

This extreme gentleness in him, Annabell, and sympathetic sorrow, touched me strongly. I could not  
 speak,

speak, though I wished to tell him, that I was much obliged to him for his concern; yet I thought, however, that I would look as if I was pleased with him for it: but when I lifted up my eyes, his were fixed on me in so particular a manner, that tho' I felt a pleasure I had never felt before, I could not then, nor can I now describe it; but I remember the expressions in his eyes perfectly well: I shall never forget it. The expression, my dear, was like that which I should discover myself, on beholding an amiable child with whom I was enamoured. However, though there was nothing in the least offensive in Mr. Wentworth's expressive look, my cheeks glowed when I observed it. He perceived my confusion, I suppose, for he grasped my hand, and with an air, diffident and respectful, asked my pardon: he then added, in the softest manner, " Oh ! that I could relieve you ! "

The

The return of Mr. Farnham and my uncle to us prevented a reply, if I could have made one: I remarked that he quitted my hand before they came up to us, and that Mr. Farnham eyed us with an eager curiosity.

To what purpose do I tell you all this? But now, upon recollection, I have got a lover, though I have only been in London a fortnight, and a man very much admired, I find, by the girls. He has both a title and a fortune to recommend him. He is generally allowed to be handsome, but you shall judge for yourself. He is rather above the common size, and is reckoned genteel: his complexion is fair: his eyes are large and blue, and have a great deal of insolence in them, which is not, in my opinion, pleasing: he has good teeth; they are called the finest set in the world: and as to his hair, it is always so violently



lently powdered, that I cannot tell the colour of it. This Sir George Ackland saw me at the opera with my uncle and aunt, and my uncle presented him to me the next day as a lover. You want to know how I received him. Why, to tell you the truth, he appeared to me in so trifling a light, that I scarce took any notice of him. When he was gone, Miss Blonden told me, that I must be the most insensible creature breathing, if I could behold Sir George with indifference. I answered her, as she has often answered me, with a laugh.

Don't you wonder, Annabell, that I can laugh when I reflect on what I have lost, and on what a disagreeable way of life I am obliged to lead in consequence of that loss? But I was early taught by that most excellent mother to resign myself to the decrees of Providence, with all possible patience; and to believe, that to  
support

( 17 )

support one's self chearfully under his dispensations, however disagreeable, however painful to us, was to give the strongest proofs of our virtue and our wisdom.

Adieu, my dearest friend. I expect to hear from you soon ; need I add, with impatience.

LUCY WHEATLY.

L E T.

## L E T T E R III.

From the same to the same.

**N**O letter was ever more welcome than your's, my dearest Anna-bell : and was the second appearance of Mr. Wentworth in the neighbourhood of the Abbey the occasion of so many questions on your part ? I am sorry that you did not return soon enough to the Grange to see him : and so he enquired very minutely concerning me of farmer Rickets, who ran out warmly in my praise ? I am glad my mother left the good old man a subsistence. I will take care, my dear, that it shall not be a scanty one. I am pleased, tho' I am at the same time sorry to find, that the poor old servants lament my absence. I would have them happy : fain would I make them so ; but then I must not be here. Oh ! how  
I wish

I wish to be with them and you, the dear friend of my tenderest years ! my beloved Annabell ! How vainly do they persuade me, that I might be happy here, where they imagine all kinds of pleasure are to be found. Alas ! I cannot find any pleasure. When I am surrounded by a crowd of people, all striving who shall please me, I am most alone. I cannot enjoy what I have no relish for. I shall feel no happiness in being an heiress with a large fortune, till I can enjoy that fortune, and spend my time with those whom I love and esteem.

Pray, can you tell me if Mr. Wentworth returned to London, or went farther towards the West ? You rally me, Annabell, about this young man : very possibly your mirth will encrease upon this question. Well, let it, I care not : I am used now to  
be

be laughed at : I am become quite indifferent to every thing.

How they tease me about Sir George ! Nay, he is most provoking himself. Were I inclined to be very vain, nothing could suit me better, than the round of nonsense which he is perpetually venting about my eyes, and my hair, and my complexion, and my smiles, and I know not what. Yet, though he is absolutely insipid, actually insupportable to me, I am accused of coquetting with him ; but I mind not what they say, as long as I am conscious that I do not merit their accusations : for I told my uncle from the very first, that I did not, that I could never like him, and begged that he would excuse my not receiving his visits : to no purpose ; he is ever here.

I am not the novice I was : I begin to be more knowing than they chuse



chuse I should be. I think I can perceive that Miss Blonden has no aversion to Sir George: she praises him even to his face, and tries to disguise me as much as possible, by persuading me to dress in the most unbecoming manner. She rallies my awkward rusticity before him; exclaims against my want of taste, and says, that I shall never arrive at any thing higher than a mere country-gentlewoman. I hear all this unmoved, while Sir George swears that he adores me for my charming simplicity, so he calls it, and declares, that if every woman was as little taken with the pleasures of the town as I am, every man would marry immediately, and that there would not be a single one of either sex remaining. Miss Blonden blushes with indignation to hear him talk in this strain, and asks if all women must be stupid in order to be admired. Poor Harriet! I pity her, if she really

ally loves Sir George: she sometimes is quite angry with me, and told me the other day, before Sir George, that for her part she had often observed, that the greatest simplicity, (laying a violent stress upon the word) turned out to be the most finished coquetry. Sir George was, or pretended to be piqued, and replied with warmth, that he found it a very difficult matter to converse with people who were inclined to put such different interpretations upon words, and protested, that he never saw any person so entirely free from the slightest tincture of that detestable disposition in women, as Miss Wheatly.

To be sure, my dear, Sir George thought I should be profusely civil to him, for thus taking my part; but he found no good effects arising from his fine speeches in my favour. I am unalterable in my opinion about him.

him. I have desired my uncle to tell him so; I don't know whether he has complied with my request, but I am determined to tell him so myself. I certainly will not lie under the imputation of coqueting with a man whom I detest. My uncle pleaded for him the other day very warmly, and said that he is allied by birth to the best families in England. "Has he, Sir, said I, an unblemished character? for the good character of a man is, I think, his strongest recommendation."

H—ns! cried poor Harriet, who ever troubled themselves about the character of a husband, provided his estate was not dipped, and his person not altogether frightful?

That is the reason, Miss Blonden, replied I, that there are so many unhappy marriages. If both men and women were more careful about the morals

als of those with whom they are to be united, than the fortunes of which they are possessed, we should not hear of so many separations in the married world.

“ Lard ! you are very wise, Miss Wheatly, said she, colouring ; 'tis really something uncommon to have so much wit and beauty go together.”

My hand is tired, my Annabell, my friend : how different are you from this Miss Blonden ; and how infinitely more esteemed

By your most affectionate

LUCY WHEATLY.

L E T-



## L E T T E R IV.

From the same to the same.

I H A V E affronted Sir George, my dear: I wanted, you know, an opportunity to get rid of him, and the best in the world offered itself most luckily for me. I had refused to accompany my aunt and Miss Blonden to an auction, the other morning, because I was more agreeably engaged in reading a very entertaining author, whose works I had never met with before. As my uncle had left this book on the table in his library when he went out, I sat down to read where I found it; but long before I designed to lay it by, my attention was diverted by the sound of Sir George's voice in the next room. I heard him, upon entering, say to the servant, "Are you sure your master dines at home?"

VOL. I.

C

"Yes,

“ Yes, Sir, replied Thomas, I expect my master and lady home every moment.”

When the door was shut, Sir George began—I found he was not alone — but before I proceed, as I intend strictly to adhere to truth, you must excuse my repeating what may induce you to accuse me of vanity, and what you may be assured I should not communicate to any living creature but yourself, whom I look upon as the friend of my heart, my second self.

Suppose now you hear Sir George say, “ I have brought you, my dear Myers, on purpose to be a judge yourself of this divine girl: tell me, faithfully, when you have seen her, whether I ought to marry her or not?”

“ Why,

“ Why, have you any doubts about it ? replied he : you like her.”

“ Like her ! that is too cold a word : I am distractedly fond of her : I am all on fire to possess her. When you have seen her dazzling complexion, her charming locks, undisguised by art, her pretty dimpling smiles, her lovely eyes, so bright, and yet so sweetly expressive of every tender passion, Oh God ! Sir William, what would I give to see this bewitching countenance, when under the influence of the softest of all passions ! I would actually give half my estate to see her once heartily in love with me.”

“ ’Tis very likely you would, said Sir William, and ’tis very likely you never may.”

“ Pshaw, how you perplex me. Why the devil should she be so very  
C 2                      differ-

different from the rest of her sex? I never yet met with a woman who did not yield to me at last, but this lovely little stubborn toad: how I adore her, and hate her at the same moment. Could I but think of any scheme to subdue that inflexible heart of hers! yet, I believe, when she likes, she is all gentleness, softness, tenderness, and love. S'death! how I am forced to bend to this haughty tyrant, only to gain a smile; but I swear, when that sweet smile is gained, 'tis worth a million. Lovely, beauteous Lucy, could I but touch that obdurate heart of thine!"

" Well, but if you could make her as much in love with you, said Sir William, as you wish, yet I find you hesitate about marriage."

" Why, to be sure, replied Sir George, if I could get her without: oh! what a delicious idea have you started;

started ; but 'tis impossible for me to succeed : she is the veriest little prude in nature."

" What kind of girl is Miss Blonden?"

" Umph ! tolerable ; extremely envious and jealous of my angelic Lucy, and fond of me to madness." There's a wretch for you Annabell.

The entrance of my uncle put a stop to this curious dialogue, but not till it had given me a thorough disgust to Sir George : I returned with great calmness to my reading, till I was summoned to dinner. You may suppose that I did not behold Sir George with the satisfaction he desired : on the contrary, I seemed scarce to see him at all, or even observe that he was at table. Such a man, my dear, is beneath the notice of a modest, well-educated girl : she hardly ought to be commonly civil



to him. Contempt is the only treatment to which he is entitled, and the only treatment he shall receive from

Your ever affectionate

LUCY WHEATLY.

P. S. I break off abruptly, because I am to go to the play with my uncle and aunt. I shall, I trust, have much to tell when I return home.

L E T.

## L E T T E R V.

From the same to the same.

**I** WONDER at your impatience to hear any thing farther about Sir George ; he really is not worthy of your enquiries ; but as you express yourself so affectionately, and have so many kind apprehensions on my account, my dear friend, I hasten to tell you all that you wish to know.

We were at table when I left off, at which I was neglectful of him to a degree beyond endurance. I would not see his assiduities : I would not hear his flatteries ; yet I was neither particularly serious nor silent. I addressed myself to my uncle, to my aunt, to Miss Blonden, to every body, in short, but to this insolent, audacious man.

Finding that he could not oblige me to change my behaviour, he, all at once, left me to myself, and began to pay his court to Miss Blonden.

Harriet, charmed to make a conquest of such importance, encouraged him to the utmost ; so I quitted the room and returned to my book, and for two days after saw nothing of Sir George.

I told you in the postscript to my last letter that I was going to the play : I went, for the first time, and for the first time since my arrival in London : was entertained : it was Jane Shore. The representation was so like reality that I was pierced to the heart : I wept like a child.

I interested myself so deeply in the fate of this unhappy woman,  
that

that I was quite inattentive to the brilliant scene around me, (which had struck me at my entrance) and regardless of all objects but those upon the stage; but imagine, my dear Annabell, how much was I surprised and provoked to find my hand seized by Sir George Ackland, who, in turning hastily about, I perceived close behind me: I drew it away with indignation; he had the assurance to take it again, and to begin a thousand fulsome speeches upon my tears, and the cause of them, which thus concluded: "and can the lovely Miss Wheatly give all her attention, all this tender, this affecting sorrow to the fancied miseries of an infamous woman, while she beholds, with the most cutting indifference, the man who is dying for her."

"Sir, replied I, with a look of the most mortifying aversion, so affecting a representation of the mis-

ries which your sex inflict upon ours, will ever excite my compassion; and the man who really occasions such miseries, or even ridicules them, will ever deserve, and certainly receive the strongest marks of my contempt."

" You are very severe, Madam, said he, with an air of vexation; but I have brought your severity upon myself by interrupting you, I suppose: your attention to the stage must have been extreme indeed, to have prevented your seeing that every creature in the house was employed in looking at you."

This remark roused me: I presently saw that I was observed by most of the gentlemen near me. Abashed and fearful of having committed some impropriety, from my having never been at a play before, I coloured excessively, and hid my face  
with



with my handkerchief, which I had before used to wipe away my tears.

A kind of sneering laugh from Miss Blonden made me look at her. I plainly perceived that she enjoyed my distress. My aunt said, poor child, she never was at a tragedy before, and then turning directly to a lady in the next box, asked her ladyship if her party was full the last night.

However, I got rid of Sir George, for that time at least; and now, my dear Annabell, tell your Lucy, your friend, what you think of her conduct. There is no body here to whom I can address such a question, because I can from nobody here expect a reasonable answer. My uncle is most likely to give me one, but then there are a thousand little things which he would not, I doubt, take in the same sense with me: besides,  
he

he is so fond of this odious Sir George.

I liked the play so well that we are to go again soon. When we came home, Miss Blonden congratulated me on having met, at last, with a diversion to my taste in London: upon which I replied, that I thought theatrical representations might be rendered of infinite service to the morals of young people, if they were properly conducted; and that if every body was as much affected, as I had felt myself, with the distresses of Jane Shore, they would certainly be deterred from following so fatal an example.

I am sure, said Miss Blonden, if every body was to sob and cry as you did, there would be no hearing of the play at all: besides, one should appear quite a fright in doing so.

My

My uncle, who is not ill-natured to me, and who, perhaps, thought Miss Harriet was rather too severe, told her, that girls had much better attend to what was doing upon the stage, than sit watching the looks of the young fellows; and added, that he would answer for my not making the worse wife for having cried at Jane Shore.

A pert toss of the head, and a look of infinite contempt from Harriet, put a stop to our conversation, as I will now to this letter, believing that I have almost tried your patience.

Your's as usual,

LUCY WHEATLY.

L E T-

## LETTER VI.

From the same to the same.

**T**HERE is more than one person, my dear Annabell, likely to be improved by this journey to London. My Amy, tho', I hope, a good girl, grows exceedingly knowing: she prates away about dress and fashion, and lovers and beauty. Sir George's man, out of livery, has, I find, been flattering my tenant's pretty round-faced daughter. The plot is, I suppose, contrived by the master, in order to discover if I like any body better than I do him. I am sure my little waiting gentlewoman cannot give him any information about me to his satisfaction. I am fond of the girl, for the sake of her good old mother, who was my nurse; and upon that account, I talk more to her than I should to any other person

person in her station ; but I have no notion of making our servants the keepers of our secrets : indeed, my dear, I have none to communicate, not even to thee, my Annabell : my heart is as open as my countenance. I am too sincere to hide even my most trifling wishes. I shall certainly never shine in the polite circles in town, in which the language of the heart is a language totally unknown, and in which the two sexes converse with each other with mutual insincerity.

I was last night at a rout. In my life I was never so weary of what is called Company ; that is, in short, a motley crowd of people, old and young, ugly and handsome, with characters and without, blended together with no other earthly design than to impose upon each other, either with their heads or their hands, and dressed out merely to act a part  
for



for the night, which they immediately throw off with their cloaths when they go home: but I am wrong: too many appear at such assemblies really what they are every where, infamous men, publicly known to have been guilty of the most dishonourable actions; and women, who have no reputation to preserve, are as well received, if they play cards, as the women of virtue and the men of honour; nay, the latter caress them with open arms, and seem not at all to imagine that their manners are contagious. While infamy is thus admitted, nay even countenanced, in every polite assembly, where can one expect to mix with people of unblemished morals, in whose society we may at least trust ourselves, if we cannot improve by it?

My uncle will in vain propose alliances to me, till I meet with a man, who, according to my ideas of moral rectitude, is an honour to his species,

species, by performing the duties of a christian; till I meet with such a man, I will remain as I am. My uncle Mordaunt is to be sure a well meaning man, as the world goes; but who can associate constantly with men of loose principles, without contracting some of their impurities.

Far different, oh! how entirely so was my dear late excellent mother: in her open, mild and benevolent countenance were always plainly written the genuine dictates of her upright heart: her piety was as free from enthusiasm, as her virtue was from prudery: she had dignity in her manners without pride, and the chearfulness of her disposition never prompted her to any levities in her behaviour. How unhappy is her daughter, in having been so early deprived of her amiable example! in having been introduced into life without her unerring assistance

anceto guide her through the perplexing mazes of folly, in which almost all young people, who mingle with what is called the great world, must be unavoidably bewildered.

Such reflections as these, my dear, frequently call up tears in the eyes of your Lucy; and though you know me to be naturally of a lively temper, will you believe me, when I tell you that I found myself amidst the gay crowd the other night, without one companion; I sighed aloud then for the friend I had lost; and I have since wept to think that she has not left her equal behind her.

But I grow serious: I shall increase your melancholy. You tell me, that you lament my absence, as I do my dear mother's death. Ah! Annabell, what a difference between us! but comfort yourself, my dear, you and I may meet again; but an eternal separation

separation is made between the most indulgent of parents, and the most affectionate of daughters.

I must change this subject: it is in some measure criminal, thus to give way to an unavailing sorrow: let me rather thank heaven, that I did not lose her before I arrived at an age when I was capable of imbibing her excellent precepts, which will ever be deeply printed in my mind.

I have been endeavouring to make a friend of my uncle this morning, and I think I may promise myself some success. He was more moderate, with regard to Sir George, than I could have expected: but though he does not insist upon my receiving him as a man who is to be my husband, he will not suffer me entirely to decline his visits. "See him with the family, child, cried he, in time you will like him better."

Here



Here comes Harriet in a great flutter about something, I must therefore bid adieu to my beloved Miss Grierson.

L. W.

---

L E T T E R VII.

From the same to the same.

**I** Have so much to say to you, my Annabell, that I do not know where to begin; my spirits are actually quite hurried.

Miss Blonden and I went to the play again the evening before last: it was a comedy; but though the whole was genteel, and well supported by the performers, there were some parts of it too free, I may add too loose, for an audience which consisted chiefly of ladies.

When



When it was over we went out. In the passage leading to our coach, we met some young men of fashion, as they are called, but they were entirely destitute of every quality which ought to distinguish men of that stamp: one of them in particular, who seemed to be not perfectly sensible of what he was about, seized me, and behaved so very unlike a gentleman, that I was a good deal frightened and extremely out of countenance to be so rudely attacked. Before I had time, however, to disengage myself from him, or even to call for assistance, another flew to us, took me from him, and with a single turn of his arm flung him at a great distance. Imagine my astonishment, my dear, when I saw Mr. Wentworth in the person of my deliverer, who, presenting his hand to me, led me to the coach. As we went along, he expressed his concern

cern at the fright I was in, and his indignation at the author of it; while I, trembling with fear, confusion and surprize, thanked him for the service he had done me in the best manner I could. When he put me into the coach, he looked earnestly at me, and said, "Will you give me leave, Miss Wheatly, to enquire after your health to-morrow at Mr. Mordaunt's."

I made no reply; I could not make any, my dear; my behaviour was certainly awkward, but my aunt relieved me. "If you are known to Miss Wheatly, Sir, said she, I can answer for Mr. Mordaunt's receiving the civility which you intend for his niece." He bowed respectfully, and the coach drove on.

"Who is this gentleman, Lucy, cried my aunt? I find that you are acquainted."

"My

“ My uncle is acquainted with him, Madam, replied I; he spent two days with us at the abbey this summer.

“ There is something pleasing in his person, said my aunt: do’nt you think so, Blonden ?

“ Umph! well enough, cried Harriet, but rather tame.”

I neither understood nor liked Harriet’s answer, my dear; and was more inclined to be of my aunt’s opinion. He had just done me an important piece of service, and had not discovered any tameness in his manner of acquitting himself; he rather threw himself upon my assaulter like a lion upon his prey. Tame! I did not relish that epithet: it was an injurious one, I thought, and what Mr. Wentworth had not by his behaviour deserved.

When

When we came home, I acquainted my uncle with our rencounter, and the occasion of it. "What, my young friend Harry? said he. Well Lucy, my wife was certainly right to invite him hither: he is a sensible, well-bred young fellow, and we owe him our thanks for the assistance he gave you."

The rest of our conversation that night was, you may imagine, upon what had happened at the play-house: you may imagine also that I retired to my apartment, not disposed to close my eyes: my head was indeed filled with such confusion of ideas, that I could not get rid of them soon, nor can I now describe what I then felt.

I rose the next morning unrefreshed, and could not sit soberly down to employ myself about any thing.

Mr.

Mr. Wentworth came rather before the usual hour of visiting in the morning. I was in the parlour, and had taken up a book, merely because I did not know what to do with myself. It was the first time, I think, that I ever found myself in such a state of listlessness.

He entered with a grace peculiar to himself. I was not in a humour to render myself capable of regulating my behaviour to my own satisfaction, but I determined, however, to make those acknowledgments which had been omitted when they were due, as I had thought myself wanting in politeness before.

Perhaps I said more to him than was absolutely necessary, for he received my thanks with as much submission as if they had been blessings from heaven. He even blushed, I

VOL. I.

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thought,



thought, as if I had over paid him. I blushed in my turn for having done so.

We were in this kind of awkward situation when my uncle and aunt came to us. They received Mr. Wentworth, to all appearance, with the utmost cordiality. My uncle desired to renew his acquaintance with him, pressed him to make his house his own, and to bring Mr. Farnham, after whom he very earnestly enquired.

My aunt, when she could get in a word, and she was not backward in her endeavours to speak, echoed all that my uncle had said. There was, you see, no occasion for me to say any thing; but, as I was really not displeased, I smiled on Mr. Wentworth from time to time, yet I thought he was not contented. He seemed to watch my looks, and to wish



pened by mere accident, that you will be glad to see me?" replied he with a dispirited voice and aspect.

The return of my aunt, accompanied by Sir George, prevented me from answering him. Sir George had, I found, been acquainted with the occasion of Mr Wentworth's visit, and made me a thousand flourishing, and, in my opinion, senseless apologies for not having been ready at my elbow to defend me. He concluded his apologies with saying, "that he could not help regarding with envy the person who had been happy enough to be of service to me."

This was uttered with an oblique sneer at Mr. Wentworth, who observed us, I thought, narrowly: but as I took no notice of Sir George, though he tried to set himself off to the best advantage, Wentworth's spirits returned, and we entered into

a general conversation, in which the latter so infinitely out-threw the Baronet, that he seemed to be piqued, and grew at last fretful. My uncle, who has a high taste for humour, rallied him smartly for being so, but he would not withdraw: he would not stay Wentworth, who, upon taking leave, was again invited, both by my uncle and aunt, to repeat his visits. He looked at me, as if he wished that I would join my invitation to theirs, but I said nothing. He left the room, I fancied, dissatisfied. Sir George seemed not to be better pleased; and I am not sorry that his vanity was mortified.

Adieu, my dearest friend, let me hear from you as soon as you can: your letters, let that be an inducement for you to write, always give particular pleasure to your affectionate

L. W.

D 3

L E T.

## L E T T E R VIII.

From the same to the same.

WHAT are you doing, my Annabell! 'tis a long time since I had a letter from you. I hope that neither your own illness, nor the return of good Mrs. Martin's disorder, has occasioned your silence. I intended not to have written till I heard from you; but I can't no longer check my inclination to write to you; my impatience is quite exhausted; I want your opinion; I want your advice; hear what I have to say, and then send me both directly.

Mr. Wentworth has been here several times since my last: Sir George, who will take no denial, not even affronts I think, has almost always met him. Their manners are so totally different, that it is impossible  
for



for them to be good company to each other. Mr. Wentworth, if he is really the amiable man he appears to be, can never like Sir George; and, if I have any skill in physiognomy, Sir George plainly hates Mr. Wentworth: he does not, indeed, attempt to disguise his aversion, tho', by the determined manner with which Wentworth sometimes answers his impertinence, he is forced to restrain his passion and his pride; but he takes a pleasure, notwithstanding, in avowing his pretensions to me before him; and has hinted more than once to him, that they are authorised by my uncle and aunt; never will they be encouraged by me, my Annabell. Could I trust my own judgment in making observations, I should imagine that Mr. Wentworth is ten times more in love with me than Sir George is; yet he has never mentioned any thing like love to me, nor has he even talked distantly to me upon

that subject, though he has frequent opportunities which have accidentally offered themselves; nay, so far has he been from making use of them, that he rather endeavoured not to be left alone with me. He scarce ever makes me the slightest compliment, never did he bestow one upon my person, and yet I cannot persuade myself that I am disagreeable to him, because we seem to have nearly the same taste in every thing; the same looks, the same amusements, the same subjects for conversation, are pleasing to us both: we are both warm admirers of a country life, both equally detest cards; we are both—but hold—I must stop here, for if I go on to describe his good qualities, after what I have said concerning our near resemblance to each other, I shall praise myself to such a degree, that even you, my friend, with all your indulgence for me,

me, will not be able to bear such intolerable vanity.

“ I see, Lucy, you are in love with this man,” methinks I hear you say.

“ Why no, Annabell, I think I am not in love with him; but I could almost wish that he was in love with me. There is no harm in wishing so, is there, my dear? Tell me, but tell me sincerely, what you think of me, for I am afraid to look into myself. I wish you was here, that I might describe every turn of his countenance, each word he utters, and the minutest of his actions; I do not like to trust every thing to paper.”

My aunt cannot, certainly, think of Mr. Wentworth as I do; but she is, nevertheless, vastly taken with  
D 5 him.

him. He behaves, indeed, equally well to every body.

I never could find out, precisely, my aunt's character. My uncle has not been married to her above five years. Her fortune, I believe, was the charm which attracted him. She is tolerable in her person, and many years younger than my uncle. Her carriage is easy and unaffected. She has ever behaved to me with great kindness; but I could never discover any thing striking in her manner. She seems to be a perfectly well-bred woman of the world, and nothing more.

But my uncle too is fond of this Wentworth: he absolutely makes a fuss about him. Miss Blonden and Sir George are the only people who don't like him, for I am nobody.

Well,



Well, my dear, I am just come from having had the oddest interview with Wentworth. More enigmas for you to unravel.

Sir George has been more decent than usual to-day. When he does not absolutely offend me, I bear with him, because I cannot get rid of him. He was quite civil to Wentworth, quite obliging to me: he made me think him uncommonly so, by taking himself away an hour earlier than his usual time of leaving us.

My aunt and Harriet were engaged in a private party, as it is called here in town, with two intimate friends, at one end of the room. Mr. Wentworth and I chatted upon different subjects at the other. On a sudden, he fixed his eyes earnestly upon me, and said, may I ask you a question, Miss Wheatly, without running a risk of being deemed impertinent;



nent; and may I also hope for a direct answer?

I hesitated, you may imagine. I was not a little surprized; however, I recovered myself. Propose your question, Sir, said I; till I hear it, how can it be answered?

“ Are Sir George Ackland’s addresses agreeable to you, Madam?”

He threw down his eyes when he had pronounced these few words, and seemed with impatience and anxiety to wait for my reply.

I looked upon him with a smile, and said, “ Your question, Mr. Wentworth, must be answered with another. Do you wish that I would think them so?”

He turned from me hastily, lifted up his eyes to Heaven, and in a low,

low, but distinct voice, cried, " distraction !"

He then rose up, walked backwards and forwards in great agitation, sat down again by me, and said, " I call Heaven to witness, Miss Wheatly, that I have not a wish but for your happiness."

" I thank you, Sir ; be assured then, that my happiness cannot be promoted by the reception of Sir George's addresses."

He made acknowledgments for the frankness of my reply, in terms which sufficiently proved how much he was pleased with it. Soon afterwards he bade me adieu.

What am I to think of this man, my Annabell, my friend ? write, oh ! write soon to your

Truly affectionate

L. W.

## L E T T E R IX.

From the same to the same.

**W**HAT a mixture of pleasure and pain did your last letter give me my dearest friend? I was transported to receive your letter after so long a silence, yet I am disturbed, to a great degree, to find myself condemned in your opinion.

Do I then prefer Wentworth to every man whom I have yet seen? you tell me I do, and I am afraid you tell the truth. You know me better than I know myself: I begin to be sensible that you are in the right. He has not been here since I wrote last to you. Oh! Annabell, his absence has taught me more than I have learnt even by his presence. What can be the reason of his staying away from us?

Sir

Sir George, who is every hour more and more my aversion, comes every day, and seems to triumph at the absence of Wentworth. I am become almost insensible of every thing but his importunities, which I refuse with all my force.

Do you like my character of Mr. Wentworth? You tell me, that he will, you think, suit me. Ah! Annabell, to what purpose, my dear girl, do you tell me so? Tell me rather, do you think that I shall suit him? that's the point. But do I not talk wildly? Have I not lost all my discretion, all that delicacy which ought to be inseparable from the modest simplicity with which I was educated?

Don't flatter me, Annabell, but tell me sincerely what you think of me, for I begin to hate myself for every thing, but for being your ever affectionate

L. W.

P. S. Amy tells me that Sir George's valet has been very inquisitive about Mr. Wentworth; from what I can learn, very impertinently so.

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L E T T E R X.

From the same to the same.

**I** Am absolutely amazed! Wentworth in D—shire! at the Abbey! at the Grange!—you have seen him! he lodges with farmer Ricket's, and has been to visit you!——I am quite out of breath with astonishment, my Annabell! Let me intreat you, by all that is dear to you, not to let him see my letters, nor to communicate the contents of them, relating to any thing.

Yet tell me, my dearest girl, every thing that he says, every thing that he  
does,



does, every thing that he thinks, (if you can guess at his thoughts) for I have never been able to find them out yet. Tell me all; I am wild with impatience to hear again from you. You have not been particular; your letter is actually short, rather dry.

Is it like my Annabell to write such letters? You ought to consider my lively temper, and my unequal spirits, which scarce know how to bear either disappointment or contradiction. Bless me! what a character have I given of myself? Can I, with this disposition, hope to fix the attention of so amiable a man as Wentworth appears to be? but I know not what I say; I only know that you have not said half enough: be more explicit, I charge, I conjure you, and write immediately

To your affectionate

L. W.

## L E T T E R   X I.

From the same to the same.

**A**ND so, my dearest Annabell, you like Mr. Wentworth: you really think him handsome: yet of how little signification is beauty in a man? But you think him also prudent, sensible and good, do you? Well, to be sure, if he is so, he deserves your commendations. And he is to keep his Christmas with you; and your father admires him; so modest; so well-behaved.

Ah! Annabell, who is in love now? take care, my dear friend; modest, worthy young men are not to be met with every day.

He mentions me, you say, with respect; he praises me with discretion. Really, Miss Grierson, you are  
grown

grown very discreet yourself, and I hope you will continue to be so.

“ He does not even desire to see my letters;” perhaps not; I would not have him see them for all the world: yet sure, my dear, to discover merit in another, is to be possessed of it in some degree oneself.

I must leave off thinking of Wentworth, at least I must forbear to write about him; it will never do to go on so, to have all my thoughts taken up about him is too much. I shall grow ridiculous: a man I know nothing of: I am quite ashamed of myself.

But my aunt misses him too: she says to the servant, I cannot tell how many times in a day I wonder what is become of Mr. Wentworth: “ are you sure that he has not been here since we were out?” My uncle asks  
me

me if I have seen him ; and even Harriet cries, “ we have lost one of our pretty fellows, Miss Wheatly.” Every body, but Sir George, feels his absence : but he rejoices that Wentworth is not here, though he endeavours, artfully, to conceal his satisfaction.

I had a good opportunity this morning to ask my uncle of what family Mr. Wentworth was: he replied, that he could not exactly tell, but informed me that he was a young man of fashion, under the guardianship of Mr. Farnham, as he was the son of a particular friend of his abroad.

But who is this Mr. Farnham, Sir, said I.

“ A gentleman of a moderate fortune, but an excellent character.” This was the answer to my question.

Write

( 69 )

Write to me directly, I shall think every minute an age till I hear from you.

Adieu,

Yours, &c.

L. W.

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L E T T E R XII.

Bow-Grange,——shire.

Miss GRIERSON to Miss WHEATLY.

AS you require me to be so circumstantial, my dear friend, in every thing relating to Mr. Wentworth, I must look back, I find, and endeavour to recollect all the little incidents, which I may not, perhaps, have exactly committed to paper. But first, my dearest Lucy, let me  
once



once again ask you, “are you certain that you can withstand all the internal good qualities of which this young stranger is possessed?”

Of how little signification, you say, is beauty in a man: yet even, while you say so, you seem to be but too sensible that his personal attractions have made an impression upon you.

Do not, my dear Miss Wheatly, be alarmed at my praising Mr. Wentworth: I am not in love with him, though I must allow him to be extremely amiable. My father is still more pleased with him than I am, but all this I have told you before.

As he is alone at farmer Rickets', my father has insisted upon his spending a great part of his time at the Grange; by doing which he has naturally, you know, introduced him into our family, rather upon an intimate

timate footing. He spoke not first to me concerning you; but as I had been informed by Rickets, that he had been down before, I asked him if he knew Miss Wheatly, because I had been told in this county that he had been twice at Oak-abbey. He had seen you, he said, the first time he went there, but when he returned the second time, he added, upon the strength of Mr. Mordaunt's invitation, you had left ——shire, and were in London, where he had since met you by accident.

You may believe that I mentoined you, my amiable friend, in the manner you deserve to be; in the manner your Annabell always thinks of you.

“ You are peculiarly happy, Miss Grierson, he replied, in your friendship, if Miss Wheatly's mind is as lovely as her person.”

I expected that he would say more : I wished to hear him proceed ; but he stopped short, and gave an immediate turn to the conversation.

As you are ever in my thoughts, and as I continually regret your departure from hence, I cannot forbear talking about you. He always listens with a respectful silence : never offers to interrupt me : seldom makes any reply ; yet, methinks, he smiles approbation.

Whenever I receive a letter from you, I fly eagerly to break it open. He knows your hand, though at a distance. " From Miss Wheatly, Madam ? I hope she is well ? " Here he stops ; but though he says no more, I see his observing eyes survey me with the most careful attention, as if he would read what you have written from my manner of receiving it. You may be assured that

that I do not show your letters to him, nor even read any part of them to him; but he has seen me smile, though my smile is that of the most compassionate friendship, my dear Lucy, for I tremble for you. I well know what a heart, sensible, delicate and tender like yours, must feel for such a man as Wentworth. Whether he feels for you or not, it is not at present in my power to determine. I wish you was here, I could then resolve all these difficulties, and I should hope according to your wishes; but I am afraid to say too much, till I make farther discoveries. In the mean time, believe me to be

Your most sincerely affectionate

ANNABELL GRIERSON.

## L E T T E R XIII.

Miss WHEATLEY to Miss GRIERSON.

**Y**OU are not, you say, in love with Mr. Wentworth, Annabell. How can I be sure that you say the truth. I am scarce sensible of what passes in my own breast, how then can I tell what passes in yours, at this distance too?

I wish indeed that I was with you, but perhaps after all you don't wish to see me at the Grange. You need not be alarmed about my heart; pray, Miss Grierson, take care of your own. You have said a thousand times more in praise of Wentworth to me, than I have to you.

Forgive me my dear Annabell, if I speak with too much freedom, I know not what I say; I am teased to death by Sir George, he is never  
out



out of the house ; and if I go abroad, he is eternally dangling by my side ; so that I am obliged to lock myself up in my dressing room to write to you.

My aunt is become still more earnest for him than my uncle. They cannot force me to have him : in a week I shall be of age. Do not think my dear, that I long to be my own mistress, and throw off my uncle's authority over me. No, indeed, I wish to be under the guidance of a sensible, worthy relation, and such a one I should ever esteem my uncle, if he was not so bewitched with this Sir George.

If my dear mother was now alive, how happy, how infinitely happy would your Lucy be at the abbey with her Annabell, and all her old, her first friends smiling round her, with an additional power to her ever

willing mind to do good, to relieve the necessitous, to place the virtuous above want, to assist the industrious, and to provide for the aged—happy, glorious task! could my youthful days be more worthily, more delightfully employed? with what enlivening hope might I then look forward to a quiet old age myself, after having spent my younger years in endeavouring to make it a blessing to others.

But you have had reflections enough; you must certainly be tired with them.

And so, you and Wentworth are upon an intimate footing: mighty pretty, Annabell. Remember that I once more bid you take care of your heart, and that I am at all times

Your most affectionate

L. W.

L E T T E R   X I V .

Miss GRIERSON to Miss WHEATLY.

**W**E are all making great preparations my dear, to celebrate your birth-day; farmer Rickets and farmer Clover, are particularly busy.

How can you imagine, my beloved, my dear Miss Wheatly, that your Annabell, your first friend, does not earnestly wish to have you with her. Surely, if you are serious, you wrong me extremely, by entertaining even a doubt of my affection for you.

Can you then really be afraid of my falling in love with Wentworth, all amiable as he is, my dear? you must be very much so yourself, to forget that my affections have long been engaged to Captain Wilson,

and that my father has given me leave to wait his return from abroad; not but that I believe, if I were inclined to be guilty of infidelity to him, and if Mr. Wentworth made any advances, my father would readily pardon my behaviour to the first, and encourage the advances of the last; but indeed, my dear Lucy, you need not be alarmed, he has nothing of the lover in his behaviour to me. He is frequently at the Grange, 'tis true, but he passes the greatest part of his time in walking about the country, in chatting with our rustic neighbours, in playing with the cleanest of their children, and in giving money to make others clean who are not so, from poverty. The whole village love him more, if possible, than you do, and he never stirs without a troop of little boys and girls after him, who bless him as he goes along.

Farmer

Farmer Gates has you know met with many misfortunes lately, of which one is, not being your tenant. Mr. Thornton, his rich but insolent landlord, has been very urgent with him to pay his rent, but the poor man, from his losses, has really not had it in his power. My father, knowing the cause of his inability to satisfy his landlord, went over to Thornton, though he hates the man, to prevail on him to give his poor tenant more time, as he has a large family. The haughty 'Squire did not enter upon the affair with my father, but as soon as he was gone, went to farmer Gates, and told him, that if he would give up his eldest daughter Kitty to him, he would not only forgive the debt, but renew his lease upon his own terms. The honest fellow received the infamous proposal with all the abhorrance and indignation that it deserved; upon



which, Thornton, who had his vile associates at hand, threatened him with a goal directly, and called in the men to seize him. Imagine that you see the poor half-distracted man begging for mercy ; his wife and young children all clinging round their cruel landlord, while Kitty drowned in tears, kneeling and irresolute, was almost ready to offer up herself a wretched victim to save her father and innocent family from utter destruction.

During this affecting interview, Mr. Wentworth entered the house. He hastily demanded the cause of this distress, and when he was informed of it, turning to Thornton, " pray Sir, says he, with a voice and look that would have confounded a much better man, how much does Mr. Gates owe you ?

That's not your business, cried the lofty landlord.

" 'Tis

“ 'Tis the business of every honest man, replied Mr. Wentworth, to relieve the unfortunate; as such a one I have a right to insist upon knowing.”

A look of half assured indignation was all the answer which he could get from Thornton. Turning therefore to the poor trembling farmer, “ Tell me, Mr. Gates, said he, freely, the situation of your affairs, how much do you owe your landlord?”

The poor farmer, astonished and abashed, stood silently looking on him, while his weeping wife replied, “ Oh! good Sir, 'tis a great debt indeed, 'tis near an hundred pounds; but we have met with many heavy losses; 'tis a very hard case.”

Make yourself easy my good dame, said the amiable Wentworth; then taking out of his pocket-book a  
E 5 bank

bank note, gave it to Mr. Thornton, and desired him to sign a receipt for Mr. Gates. He sullenly complied, and then flung out of the house, having first told the farmer, that he would not subject himself again to such treatment, and that he should turn out at quarter-day.

The poor relieved family were too much affected with their deliverance, and too much taken up with paying their thanks to their deliverer, to hear him; but not a word of what he had said was lost upon Wentworth. He bade them suppress their acknowledgments, and make themselves happy within, while he went to Mr. Grierson, who would, he knew, stand their friend in getting them another farm: and indeed my father was so pleased with this generous action of Mr. Wentworth's, that he has let one of his best pieces of land to Gates.

We

We are all vastly charmed with this young man's behaviour upon the above, and upon every other occasion: but my father calls, and as I have exceeded the usual length of my letters, must conclude with sincerely assuring you that I remain

Most affectionately

Your's

A. G.

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L E T T E R   X V .

Miss WHEATLY to Miss GRIERSON.

Hill-Street.

**W**HY, why did you not, my Annabell, prepare me for receiving that affecting relation of poor Gates's distress, and of Wentworth's  
great

great humanity; it came upon me too abruptly, and quite overcame me; I have wept till I am half blind. He must be a worthy creature, and surely we ought to love and reward virtue wherever we find it.

That hateful Thornton would have made proposals to me in my dear mother's time, but I will never marry a man who dares to oppress the indigent. How many girls, ignorant and innocent, like myself, have been imposed upon by designing men? it could not surely be any inclination for Kitty Gates, that occasioned an action which appears so disinterested. She is vastly pretty you know, and has a simplicity in her manners which must please a man of the least sensibility. But I do Wentworth wrong, far be all such mean suspicious thoughts from me. I will believe him good, till I have reason to think that he is otherwise.

How



How different is Sir George; I am determined to get rid of him at all events.

But does not Wentworth talk of coming to London? Is he absolutely in love with the Grange and all of you, that he cannot leave D—shire? has he forgot every body in town?

Oh! Annabell, though you are not in love with him, he may be so with you. These two sudden journies to the Grange!— I cannot write— I shall say something which I had better keep to myself, adieu, my dear Annabell; notwithstanding the whimsicalness of my conduct, I am, and ever shall be

Your affectionate,

L. W.

L E T-

L E T T E R XVI.

Miss GRIERSON to Miss WHEATLY.

Bow-Grange.

**I** Must begin my letter, my dear Lucy, with asking your forgiveness for what I have done; yet I could not think of any other method to come at what you so earnestly desire to know but by reading that part of your letter, in which you so ardently wish to be at the abbey under the care of your excellent mother, and mistress of your fortune that you might bestow it upon the wretched.

To Mr. Wentworth I read it, my dear, in the most pathetic manner imaginable, and indeed I was so much affected with it myself, that it caused no small alteration in my voice. I observed him well, he listened with attention, and strove to suppress a sigh,

figh, which at last burst from him in spite of his endeavours to prevent it. He turned from me; I saw him wipe his eyes; after a pause which lasted a few moments, " your lovely friend, Madam, said he with a faltering voice, has a most amiable disposition. You are infinitely happy in possessing her esteem, such a heart must be of inestimable value indeed."

He went out of the room immediately, as if on purpose not to hear any reply.

Now, my Lucy, have I done amiss? if I have, believe me I have done so with the best intention in the world. I feel your anxiety, it gives me pain, and I wish to relieve you.

We are to have a ball upon your account to-morrow sen'night: Mr. Wentworth is to be my partner in the dance: Our dancing together cannot

not well be avoided, you know, as there is scarce any body else to whom he is at all known, who is in a station in life proper for him; for he did not accompany my father, though invited, either to Sir Thomas Meadows', Mr. Worthy's, or Mr. Ploughshare's; those few families are all we have down in our neighbourhood, at this time of the year. You will ask perhaps, how it happened that he was invited by them—because he was seen at church with us my dear, at which he is very constant. Mr. Worthy, our good rector, sent the first Sunday to offer him a seat in his pew, but as my father had been before-hand with him, Mr. Wentworth has been with us. A Sunday or two ago, we staid rather longer in the church than usual, on account of a little crowd in the porch, which was occasioned by the entrance of a christening. I turned to the Manor-pew, while we were waiting, which I have so often seen  
filled

filled by my beloved Lucy and her excellent family, and said, “there Mr. Wentworth, there my dear Miss Wheatly used to sit, I wish I could see her now. He made no answer, but he has fixed his eyes upon that spot ever since.

As to Kitty Gates, so far from having the least inclination for her, in the way you apprehend, he has persuaded her father to marry her to a young farmer, who has long had a mind to her, and whom she herself likes, in order to remove her farther from Mr. Thornton, and has given ten guineas towards housekeeping. They quite adore him, and indeed, all the poor look upon him as an angel sent from Heaven to their relief, in this season of scarcity and desolation: were it not for your large allowance, and his goodness, they would be half starved, as the price of every kind of provisions is still increas-



increasing, and as the severity of the weather prevents them from having their usual employment.

By accident, I discovered yesterday that he is musical. I wanted to speak to your Amy's mother, and therefore called at the abbey. Mr. Wentworth was with me, as we had been taking a walk together, the morning being remarkably fine. Your good old nurse, they told me, was in the garden, I asked him if he would go and seek her there; he made no objection.

In passing by the brown parlour, (the door happening to be open) we discovered the organ which used to give your dear mother so much pleasure, whenever you played upon it. He seemed to be pleased at the sight of it. I told him it was your instrument, and asked him if he played, and if you had forgot your music  
since

since you had been in London. He said he never had heard you play. She used, I replied, to perform extremely well: she has the sweetest voice you ever heard. I can easily believe you, Madam, replied he, I have already found Miss Wheatly possessed of every charm, but that of being musical, which must still be an additional one, if such an heavenly voice can want any thing to make it more touching.

He concluded these words with a sigh, but all my endeavours could not oblige him to resume the subject, though he very willingly sat down and played a concerto in a delightful taste. I pulled all your music books out of your drawer, which was unlocked, and shewed him your favourite pieces, which were, I discovered by his manner, particularly agreeable to him. But in turning them over, when we came to that  
of

of which you always expressed a remarkable fondness (you will remember it I am sure, when I tell you that the two last lines run thus

That heart can ne'er a transport know  
Which never felt a pain)

He caught it up, and played it more than once, and after having repeated the words to me, " don't you think Miss Grierson, said he, that your friend will be offended, if I beg this little song; there is something pleasing in the air, and the words are really extremely pathetic. I looked as if I did not know, whether I ought to give it to him or not, but after a moment's consideration, replied with a smile, that I would ask your leave the next time I wrote to you, on condition, that he would come every day and give me a lesson on the organ. He promised to comply with my request,

quest, and kept his word this morning. My father, the two Miss Worthys, and young Meadows, accompanied me. They were as much pleased as myself: but am I not to blame, my sweet Lucy, for talking to you thus continually of this young gentleman's amiable qualities. If you really like him, what I have said will but increase your inclination for him; and till you know whether that may be encouraged with propriety—I think I am——but all that I have said has been, you know, at your own earnest request, and the slightest of your request, can never be refused by

Your most

Affectionate

A. G.

L E T.

L E T T E R   X V I I .

Miss WHEATLY to Miss GRIERSON.

**I** Have had a long conversation with my uncle this morning. I have told him more positively than ever, that I cannot bear to receive Sir George's visits any longer.

“ Why, you do not receive them, child, says my uncle. My wife tells me that you will never be left alone with him. Surely you may bear the sight of him with my family.”

It is not proper for me to be alone with him, sir, said I, with a quickness and a spirit I had never spoken to my uncle with before, and if you knew him as well as I do, you would, I dare say, be of my opinion.



you read no more paragraphs from my letters to your partner.

And so Wentworth is fond of music, and excells in it? does he not dance divinely too? You are happy, my dear Miss Grierson, in having so accomplished a man down at the Grange, during this desolate season, as you call it; as desolate as it is, the town is infinitely more so to me; yet, I don't know how, I am in unusual spirits to day.

I am glad that Wentworth has so fine a finger upon the organ: you are acquainted with the instrument: it has a good tune, and a flute stop. I was particularly happy in my master, who came down to spend part of the summer months at Sir Thomas Meadows'; by that means he was introduced into our family, taught me to play, and procured the organ at my mother's desire.

I have been but too negligent about my music. Both my uncle and my aunt have often urged me to send for Burton, to improve my taste, but I have never thought about it; I will order him, however, to come directly.

Let Wentworth have the song: I am glad that it pleases him: my mother used to have a great partiality for it: it was an old one, she said, but not the less agreeable for being so. It was her approbation which endeared it to me.

But what is it to me, whether Wentworth plays well or not? I may never hear him. We have, 'tis true, an harpsichord here, but nobody touches it.

I am just told that Sir George is below. When I have sent him away, I will return to my pen.



So—Sir George is gone off, rather in a pet. When I came down, he accosted me in his free manner, and expressed his happiness at seeing me alone. That happiness, Sir George, said I, will be but of a very short duration, for I am engaged this morning, and shall be every day.

How, Miss Wheatly! replied he, with an astonished look.

Sir, returned I, it is a great deal better to be explicit with you at once. I have often told my uncle that you was not the man whom I should ever chuse, and desired him to let you know it; but as either he has omitted to give you the information I desired, or you have not chosen to believe it, I now assure you that I shall not receive any more visits from you, because I don't approve of giving the slightest encouragement to the man with whom I never intend to be united.

He opened his mouth in order to make a reply, but I left him abruptly. I was just sitting down to finish my letter, when my aunt and Miss Blonden entered my dressing-room.

My dear Miss Wheatly, said my aunt, what have you done to Sir George? we found him in the strangest way when we came in just now!

He is certainly, Madam, said Harriet, not in his proper senses, for we can get nothing from him distinctly.

Sir George, Madam, said I, is so very disagreeable to me, that I have obtained my uncle's leave to receive no more visits from him; in consequence of that permission, I have freely told Sir George my sentiments concerning him.

Oh! cried Harriet, and was it then the declaration of your sentiments

ments which put him so much out of humour. Indeed, Miss Wheatly, I wish you do not suffer for being so cruel to such a charming fellow as Sir George.

I made no answer to this speech. My good aunt began to plead for him, but to little purpose. When she found that what she had said made no impression on me, she withdrew, and took her companion with her.

You asked me, I remember, on my first coming to London, who this Miss Blonden was: I never thought of telling you till this moment. She is a very distant relation of Mrs. Mor-daunt's. Having but a small fortune, and a taste to enjoy a large one, she is glad, for the sake of mixing in high life, to submit to the most mortifying treatment: she is called about with as little ceremony as if she was a common servant, and receives very

F 3

little



little more respect in the family. I have seen my aunt, though not an ill-natured woman, behave to her with such a total neglect of civility, that I have been astonished at them both: I have wondered how the one could take such humiliating liberties, and how the other could, unresenting, bear them.

Harriet Blonden's person is rather agreeable than otherwise, and she does not want understanding; but she has a violent passion for pleasure, which renders her at once displeasing to others, and unhappy in herself.

And so you have introduced Wentworth to every body, and every body is charmed with him. No wonder. How generous was he to present the young married couple with ten guineas! The man who delights in making his fellow-creatures happy, deserves to be made so himself.

The

The conclusion of your last, my good Miss Grierson, is extremely kind, every way worthy of your excellent heart, and the affectionate friendship which you ever shewed to me; but I must desire you still to write every particular to

Your most truly affectionate

L. W.

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L E T T E R XVIII.

Miss GRIERSON to Miss WHEATLY.

**I** Am glad, my dearest Lucy, to find you have recovered your spirits. You discover more joy at having got rid of a lover, than many people shew at having got one.

Mr. Wentworth was sitting by me when I read your letter: as several

parts of it made me smile, he looked at me earnestly, and said, if I may form any judgment, Miss Grierson, from your aspect, your friend is well, and——happy, I hope, added he, with a little hesitation.

She is both well and happy, replied I, laughing: she is particularly happy, because she has just dismissed a lover who has long been very disagreeable to her—Sir George Ackland, continued I, seeing him rather uncommonly eager, by his looks, to be acquainted with the name of the man whom you had dismissed.

He made no answer, however, upon my mentioning Sir George, but I observed, that from being very serious, he became all on a sudden extremely chearful. She has also complied with your request, said I; she has desired me to give you the  
I;

song to which you have taken such a fancy, and you shall have it to-morrow.

She is all goodness, replied he, resuming his serious air: and then, leaving me abruptly, to read the remainder of your letter by myself, went into the garden.

He thanked my father the next day for all our civilities to him, and told us that he was under a necessity of returning to London in the morning: you may be sure that we shall miss him not a little. I shall not fold this up till he is set out.



Mr. Wentworth is gone. The whole village is in tears. Before his departure, he went round to all the cottages, in which he used to distribute his bounties, and left something at each of them. When he had bade

them adieu, he asked me if he should carry a letter from me to you, as he should ride post : he waits for this, otherwise I would make it longer.

Farewell, my dearest Lucy, and be assured that I am ever

Your's,

A. G.

P. S. I shall impatiently expect to hear of your meeting in town.

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L E T T E R   X I X .

Miss WHEATLY to Miss GRIERSON.

I Have got your letter, my dear Annabell, but Wentworth brought it not himself, nor have I seen him, though I have had my letter two or  
three



three days. Why he has not been here I cannot imagine; I am weary of conjectures; I will therefore think no more about him.

More troubles for your Lucy. Lord William R——, second son to the Duke of ——, has thought proper to take notice of me. He has had an interview with my uncle. My fortune, I believe, has captivated him full as much as my person; though I am told that this young nobleman has an unblemished character, and is possessed of a fortune independent of his father, which was left by a relation. I have seen him at public places, and think his person rather agreeable; but feeling no sort of inclination to receive his addresses, I have declined them.

Harriet says, that I am extremely nice indeed, to refuse two such men as Sir George and Lord William: the latter

latter will absolutely take no denial. He begged to be admitted as an occasional visiter to my aunt, and my good-natured uncle could not resist his importunities. My uncle is quite an easy man, you see.

I do not take any notice of Lord William. I very assiduouſly apply myself to my music; 'tis a new amusement, and comes very opportunely to relieve my mind when I am fatigued with thinking.



Annabell, my dearest girl, I have seen Wentworth: I was sitting alone at my harpsichord, yesterday morning, when he entered the room. I started at the sight of him: I dropped my book: I was confused. He too seemed to be disconcerted, and made an incoherent kind of apology for having been so long in town without seeing me. He then spoke of the Grange, of the Abbey, of  
thee,

thee, my Annabell, but in terms which, though they flattered my vanity in being possessed of so amiable a friend, gave me no room to suspect that he felt any thing more than a sincere esteem for my dear Miss Grier-son, with which she will not, I dare say, be displeased, as her heart is attached to another; and as she has too good an understanding to be in the least addicted to coquetry.

I could have talked of the dear place of my birth for hours and hours with exquisite delight, but he interrupted me, to ask for a song. I could not handsomely refuse his request: I did not wish to refuse it; but I did not perform well.—I trembled: I was out: I blushed for my confusion: yet he intreated me to sing another.—By this intreaty I was reassured, and sung better; but a bow, accompanied by a gentle sigh, was the only praise I received for my performance.

Shall

Shall I confess my weakness to you, my dear. I was disappointed: I expected to please, perhaps to charm—I was mortified. What poor, vain creatures are we, after all? Early admiration is certainly the most destructive thing in the world to a woman: accustomed to that we are never satisfied without continual flattery, more indeed than we are intitled to; though what we receive is, probably, much more than we deserve. A desire to excell is, however, laudable; without such a propensity we should never be excited to make a progress in any studies.

But why should I wish to be admired for my singing? Is it a talent of any use to myself, or to any other living creature? I should rather wish to be admired for those qualities which may render me beneficial to my friends; yet music is, without doubt, a pleasing and innocent amusement:

ment: one must have relaxation now and then: one cannot always keep the mind on the stretch.

When I had a little recovered from my disappointment, I asked Wentworth to sit down to the instrument. He played charmingly, beyond expression. I could not conceal the pleasure which I felt at his taste and execution, and thanked him for the entertainment he had given me, in terms which plainly discovered how much I was delighted. Yet, will you believe me, I fretted to see him with such perfect ease of mind perform in so masterly a manner.

He received my praises with an amiable modesty, and concluded his acknowledgments by saying, that if I really thought his performance tolerable, I should give him the most sincere proof of my approbation by  
the



the accompaniment of my enchanting voice.

This little compliment, my dear, would you think it, quite intoxicated me: I became giddy with delight: I exerted all my vocal powers, and had the heart-felt satisfaction to see Wentworth absolutely lost in transport, and so entirely softened, that I do not know whether he could not for ever have retained, what I am sure now is, a forced silence, if my aunt had not come into the room, who expressed great pleasure at seeing him again: but as I had observed that he never mentioned his having been in D——shire, I took not any notice of that journey.

What trifles, apparently so, make us happy for a time! and yet perhaps, after all, our happiness depends but too much on what only ought to bear that name.

My

My aunt is certainly taken with Wentworth. She never quitted him while he staid; yet she did not entirely address her conversation to him. She told me of a visit we are to make this evening to Lady Julia C——d, daughter to the Earl of ——, who is just come to town.

I thought I saw Wentworth change colour at the mention of this Lady's name; but perhaps I am mistaken. When I have seen her I will write again, if my letters amuse you. Wentworth tells me, that you desire I would not insist upon having letter for letter, as your recluse way of life prevents you from having any thing entertaining to send me: but certainly, my dear, your observations upon what I write, and your friendly advice, will always make your epistles highly valuable to your ever affectionate

L. W.

## L E T T E R XX.

From the same to the same.

I Spent my time very agreeably the day before yesterday, my dear, at the Earl of ——'s. A description of Lady Julia C—— will not, I fancy, be disagreeable to you. She is about nineteen, very tall for that age, and finely formed, though inclining to be large. Her complexion is absolutely of a dazzling white, with a colour like a new-blown rose in her cheeks. Her eyes are large, blue, and languishing. Her mouth and teeth are pretty, but her hair too much resembles the golden locks so much talked of by the poets in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; but it is, no doubt, thought beautiful, as it was not disguised by powder. She may, justly indeed, be reckoned a lovely woman. She had a sweet diffidence

fidence in her manners, so totally different from all the younger part of my sex, with whom I have hitherto conversed in London, that I am greatly pleased with her.—Think not, however, my dearest Annabell, that I can ever esteem any one like thee, my first, my most beloved friend, and my most sensible, amiable companion.

From the conversation which I have had with this young Lady, I do not imagine that her sentiments are particularly striking; she rather appears to me to be of that gentle, complying kind of disposition which listens and assents to those who either think more deeply, and entertain by having made a great variety of observations, or to others who throw out, with an agreeable vivacity, new thoughts, and afford a vast deal of amusement by communicating

cating a numerous train of original ideas.

I long to have Wentworth's opinion of Lady Julia prodigiously. I fancy, sometimes, that I am too lively for him: but all this is mere conjecture, my dear, for he has not dropped a single word by which I can form the slightest guess at his thoughts about me.

As I find that I am likely to have many subjects for the employment of my pen, I shall for the future write my letters more in the journal-way; leaving off, and beginning again as I see occasion; by doing which I shall render them more amusing to you, and write them with more ease to myself.



Oh! Annabell, such a scene have I gone through this evening! I scarce have



have strength or spirits left to relate what I have endured.

How lively, how chearful was I in the morning, when I began this letter; and now, h——n! what a situation am I in!

My aunt and Miss Blonden were engaged to go to a rout: I was sitting to finish my letter to you, when the door opened and Wentworth appeared; but with a countenance so very pale, with an air so extremely dejected, that I could not but conclude something very extraordinary had happened: even his dress partook of the melancholy which was diffused over his whole person, and all his fine hair was in disorder.

Before he had time to speak I cried out, bless me, Sir, are you not well? has any thing happened to —?

I was proceeding, with a countenance in which I am sure my concern was very sensible, when he, throwing his eyes on the ground, and fetching a deep sigh, said with a tremulous voice, I am come, Miss Wheatly, to take leave of you: I am going abroad.

These few words, my dear, were enough. Abroad, Mr. Wentworth, said I! good h——n! what occasions so sudden a departure! I thought that you had already made the tour of Europe.

I have, Madam, replied he, that was a different tour from this: I went abroad then for pleasure, for improvement; I am now driven out of England by necessity.

I felt astonished, frightened, and concerned: I suppose that I looked so: I could not indeed by any means  
con-

conceal my sorrow, the tears rushed into my eyes.—He thus went on:

From the extreme goodness of your heart, Miss Wheatly, and the obliging marks of your esteem with which you have hitherto honoured me, I had all the reason in the world to imagine that you could not see me thus distressed, thus cast off by him whom I was encouraged to believe my friend, and whom I also deemed in some measure bound by the ties of nature to provide for me, without being affected at the sight. The desertion of this friend is doubly unkind, as I have not been educated in a manner, nor with a view to seek my subsistence thus all at once, without the means which, on the lowest born man, are generally bestowed: I have been for some hours doubtful, whether I should give your gentle heart the pain of beholding me thus unhappily circumstanced,  
but

but I could not bear to leave you, Miss Wheatly, to leave you perhaps for ever, without once more seeing you, without once more assuring you, by all that's good and sacred, that, for no crime, I am obliged to seek a livelihood far from all that is dear and valuable to me in this world; and let what will be my station, there will be no change in my sentiments. From my first acquaintance with Miss Wheatly, I have looked upon her with the most respectful esteem, with a kind of reverential awe, and I shall, to the last moments of my life, retain the emotions which I at this instant feel for her.

Here he stopped: his eyes waited for my reply: he seemed too much moved to go on. For my part, I was drowned in tears. I could have almost given my life at that moment to relieve him.—The surprize, and the grief with which I had been so  
 sud-

suddenly seized, deprived me for a time of all presence of mind ; but collecting my scattered thoughts together all at once, I begged him to stay till I returned. I then ran half breathless into my closet, and putting five hundred pounds in bank notes (which I had luckily received in the morning) into my pocket-book, went back to him, and presenting it to him, said with a voice so entirely softened that it was hardly intelligible, You have met with ill treatment, Mr. Wentworth, for which I am truly grieved ; you are going, perhaps, into a way of life to which you have been but little accustomed, accept of this book as some proof of my esteem for the man who could never let suffering merit go unassisted, while he had it in his power to relieve it.

As soon as I had spoken these words, I advanced towards my closet.



He caught hold of my gown. Stay one moment, said he, trembling with the violence of his emotions, one moment.

I turned and looked at him. He was on his knees before me, stretching out one of his hands with the notes in it: thus, said he, let me pay my sincerest thanks, generous Miss Wheatly: but oh! forgive me, if I cannot, must not accept of what I am forced to appear unworthy to receive. But this book, continued he, pressing it with his other hand to his heart, this dear book alone, without its valuable contents, will ever be most highly esteemed by me, if you will permit me to keep it.

Rise, then, said I, weeping still excessively, it is your's; and if I cannot prevail on you to accept of what it contained, let me at least lay by the contents for you; they are also  
 2 your's,

your's, whenever you think proper to demand them.

He arose, bowed, but seemed unwilling to go: he still lingered, and looked back, while I, quite overcome with a thousand affecting sensations, gave a free vent to my sighs and tears, which I could by no efforts restrain.

I sat down upon the sofa, my head rested on one hand, and with the other I wiped away the tears as they rolled along my face. He was just got to the door; he made a full stop: I cannot go, said he, turning back, I cannot leave you thus, Miss Wheatly, continued he, placing himself by me.

This affecting sorrow, which, in happier hours, would have blessed me beyond my warmest wishes, now tears me to pieces: tell me only some-

thing to say to you, that will check these melting tears, or I am lost for ever.

What can I say, Mr. Wentworth, cried I, but that you have my sincerest wishes, my most fervent prayers for your happiness.

Oh G—d! cried he, pressing my hand with ardor to his bosom, while he threw up his fine eyes, streaming with tears to Heaven, Bless, bless, for ever, with the greatest felicity, this dear, this most deserving of women!

He then immediately left the room, without once turning his eyes towards me. As soon as he was gone, being almost stifled with grief, I sobbed aloud, and, on my knees, earnestly implored Heaven to protect him.

It was near the time of my uncle and aunt's coming home, before I became

became tolerably composed ; and then, not being fit to appear, nor able to think of rest, I bid Amy say I was not very well, ordered her to go to bed, and sat down to write to thee, my friend.

And now tell me, my Annabell, tell me what you think of this amazing alteration in Wentworth's affairs. I might certainly have enquired a little more into them, with no great impropriety, but he came so suddenly upon me, and I was so unprepared to receive such a shock, that I never was more at a loss how to behave. Do you, my best, my dearest friend, read over carefully what I have written, and send your opinion directly to

Your ever affectionate

L. W.

G 3

L E T-

## L E T T E R XXI.

Miss GRIERSON to Miss WHEATLY.

N E V E R, my dearest Lucy, was I more amazed than at the contents of your last letter. I must confess that I am quite as much at a loss as you are to unravel such a mysterious proceeding. Any person who had but a slight acquaintance with Wentworth, would naturally have asked him the cause of his being cast off by his friends; much more should you, my dear, have made that inquiry, who have been so particular in your attachment to him, which, doubtless, he has seen, and very possibly this distress may be all pretended to try you. I am not willing, however, to have an ill opinion of a man who has hitherto appeared in so very amiable a light. I know not what to think. Perhaps he has, from the beginning,



beginning, been needy, and has only had a design upon your fortune : his coming down here, and ingratiating himself with my father, myself, your friends and tenants, are suspicious circumstances. With what other view could he come down here? I now wonder that I did not suspect him before ; but the most wary, the most discreet, have not always their thoughts about them. All that staggers me is, that he did not accept of the notes which you, in the height of your concern, offered to him ; but he, perhaps, only refused them in order to fix you more strongly in his favour, that he may, hereafter, do what he pleases, unsuspected.

Take care, my beloved, my valuable friend ; be upon your guard : such excellent, such generous, such candid dispositions, ever are most liable to be betrayed.

I am quite alarmed, quite uneasy about you: for the love of Heaven, do not give way to an inclination that may lead you into a thousand difficulties. If you have not been able to preserve your heart from being affected by his seducing behaviour, save at least your person and fortune from falling a prey to him. You he knows, just now become your own mistress: this discovery of real, or pretended indigence, at this critical juncture, increases all my suspicions, and, doubtless, my fears.

I have not slept since I received your letter. You are not to be told how truly I esteem you, how sensible I am of the value of my dear, excellent friend: for my sake, for your dear mother's sake, oh! learn, my beloved Lucy, to respect yourself.—Make an immediate use of the understanding with which Heaven has blessed you, and drive a passion from  
your

your breast, which, I now much fear, if encouraged, will make you miserable for ever.

Forgive me, my dear, if I have written too freely upon this interesting subject, and be assured, that I would not write with such freedom, if I was not anxious about your happiness, for which no body wishes more sincerely than

Your most affectionate

A. G.

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L E T T E R   XXII.

Miss WHEATLY to Miss GRIERSON.

**Y**OU will, no doubt, be not a little surprized at my silence, and inclined to chide me, my dearest

G 5

Anna-

I am quite alarmed, quite uneasy about you: for the love of Heaven, do not give way to an inclination that may lead you into a thousand difficulties. If you have not been able to preserve your heart from being affected by his seducing behaviour, save at least your person and fortune from falling a prey to him. You he knows, just now become your own mistress: this discovery of real, or pretended indigence, at this critical juncture, increases all my suspicions, and, doubtless, my fears.

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Your most affectionate

A. G.

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L E T T E R   XXII.

Miss WHEATLY to Miss GRIERSON.

**Y**OU will, no doubt, be not a little surprized at my silence, and inclined to chide me, my dearest  
G 5                      Anna-



Annabell, for not acknowledging sooner your last most kind and friendly admonitions; they should have been, indeed, sooner acknowledged, with my grateful thanks; but by a slight fit of illness, and a number of events, which quickly succeeded each other I have been obliged to defer writing, till I could range what I had to say in some order.

To begin then regularly. The extreme uneasiness into which I was thrown by Wentworth's abrupt departure, brought on a kind of fever, which confined me to my room for a few days. I was not sorry that I was confined, because I was very unfit for company. Your kind letter was brought to me during this confinement, and put a thousand things into my head, which I had never thought of before, but of which it was necessary perhaps for me to think: yet I own, my Annabell, that I was  
loth;

loth; I could not absolutely bring myself to give up Wentworth.—We hear of men, indeed every day, who are actuated intirely by interested motives, and you had, I grant, some reason to be suspicious; but there was an honesty in Wentworth's looks, and a frankness in his manner, which convinced me that he was more unfortunate than undeserving. I have ever had a favourable idea of my own penetration, and have seldom found myself deceived; I will not lean, however, too much upon it. I own that I think myself to blame in not having made farther enquiries about the occasion of his going abroad, but it was too late to make them after he was gone. I determined, therefore, to wait the event with all the patience I could muster up. If he is a designing wretch, he will soon return to forward his schemes, if he is not, I must and will lament his hard fate.

These,

These, and a multitude of such thoughts, filled my mind, and I believe retarded my recovery. In about a week, however, I got down stairs again. I had said nothing to my uncle nor my aunt relating to Wentworth's last visit; the latter and Miss Blonden staid pretty much at home with me while I was ill, but were engaged to go to the opera of last Saturday. As I was neither in health nor spirits, I could not accompany them, but sat down in my dressing-room to try to divert my thoughts with a book. Guess at my astonishment to see Wentworth approach! not the plain, undrest, negligent Wentworth, who had so lately taken leave of me, but Wentworth adorned with all the taste and elegance of dress! His figure, I will confess, my Annabell, was perfectly charming, but there was the same paleness in his countenance, the same dejection in

in his air, only mingled with a softer and more tender expression.

I started, you may be sure, at his unexpected appearance; he advanced towards me with more resolution, and less restraint than I had ever observed in him.—I am come, Madam, said he very respectfully, to thank you for your unexampled goodness to me the last time I waited on you, and to let you know what, I flatter myself, will give you pleasure, that my affairs have taken a more favourable turn, and that I shall have the happiness of remaining, in the same kingdom at least, with the amiable, the excellent Miss Wheatly.

I was so amazed, my dear, that I was not able at first to reply; however, I soon recovered myself, and said, that I should be always glad to hear of his good fortune.

I believe, my dear, the suspicion with which you had filled my head, gave rather a coolness to my behaviour to him : I thought it proper, at least, to assume that behaviour till I found reason to alter it, though, in so doing, I did, I assure you, great violence to my inclination.

He saw, immediately, the change in my carriage, and looked earnestly at me, as if he wanted to penetrate into the cause of it, but as I kept my eyes fixed upon the carpet, he could not read the sentiments of my heart in them.

A pretty long silence ensued, during which I heard him sigh several times.

You have been ill, Miss Wheatly, I have been told, said he with an affecting voice ; and I am sorry to see  
you



you look so much paler than you did when I saw you last.

A proper opportunity now, my dear, offered, I thought, for me to get the explanation we have so long wished for, and I considered how I should bring it about; but when I reflected that, by expressing so much curiosity about him, he would be naturally led to imagine that I interested myself very much in his affairs, more so, indeed, than I had a right to do, unless there was any particular connection between us; when I reflected too, that if I had discovered too much concern upon his account, it was now over, and that my willingness to assist him might be looked upon as a benevolent action, which I might have offered to any person of my acquaintance in such a situation, I stopped myself, and coolly said, that I was a good deal better.

He

He sighed again, at the shortness of my answer I suppose, and seemed to be restless and unhappy. A violent rap at the door relieved me. The servant announced, Lady Julia C—d, who had asked for me, when she was told that my aunt was abroad. As I had not given orders to be denied, she was admitted.

I received her with great pleasure, but when she saw Wentworth, she blushed prodigiously. He bowed respectfully to her, but did not join in the conversation. In a little time he rose up and took his leave. I never till then, my dear, rejoiced at his absence; I seized the moment, and asked her if she was acquainted with Mr. Wentworth.

Certainly I am, said she, for my father is: have you known him long Miss Wheatly?

Not

Not a great while, my Lady, said I; it was by mere accident that he became acquainted with my uncle, who has not been able to inform himself thoroughly about him. She replied, with a still deeper blush, Mr. Mordaunt will be perfectly safe in Mr. Wentworth's acquaintance; his birth is noble: his fortune is considerable: his character is irreproachable, at least, continued she smiling, this is the account which I have had of him from my father, who would not, I imagine, deceive me in so material a point.

There, now are your doubts vanished, my Annabell? mine are dissipated for ever concerning his integrity; but new ones arise in my mind about Lady Julia. Why should she blush at the sight of him, why so highly commend him? Is she, like me, and all the world, in love with him too. Poor Wentworth!

I

I have not used him kindly. He left me dissatisfied; but I will repair all my wrong behaviour when I see him again.

Lady Julia made a visit unusually long, for the first time, and by so doing, gave me a great deal of pleasure: she is actually very amiable. I wish you could see her.

To what an amazing length have I spun this letter, and yet I cannot finish it: I shall not have leisure to close it till to-morrow.



The day has been.—It is gone.—

The very next morning after Lady Julia made her visit to me, we were all sitting in the parlour chatting after break-fast. Wentworth came in. They were glad to see him—he returned their salutations with his usual politeness. His eyes were then fixed  
on

on me in such a manner, so different from what they used to be, with such an expressive tenderness, yet with so much diffidence and respect, that I was quite disconcerted. I blushed, rose up to conceal my confusion and walked to the window. Harriet, luckily, was out of the room.

Wentworth followed me to the window, and stood close behind me for some time, without opening his lips. Turning about, I started at seeing him so near me; but not willing that he should think he was the object of my observation, I asked him with a smile, how long he had been acquainted with Lady Julia C——d.

I am not acquainted with her, Madam, replied he, I met her once before at a visit.

Is she not an agreeable woman, Mr. Wentworth, said I?

She



She is very tolerable, Madam, answered he.

A conversation upon this ensued between my uncle, aunt and Wentworth about this young Lady, and I found that Wentworth did not see so many beauties in her person as they had descried.

She sings very finely, I am told, said my aunt, but I never heard her.

Those who have heard Miss Wheatly, Madam, replied he, will not think so, I believe.

I blushed at the preference which he gave me. Shall I own, my Annabell, that I felt an excessive satisfaction.

Why Lucy has a sweet voice, to be sure, said my aunt, and since she has learnt of Burton, begins to play

play in taste; but her indisposition has made her neglect her music again.

Ay, said my uncle, but she is well enough now: come, come, Mrs. Mordaunt, continued he, addressing himself to my aunt, let us go to the harpsichord, and she will give us a song.

I looked at Wentworth with all my vivacity: If Mr. Wentworth will accompany me, Sir, said I, but I have not yet spirits sufficient to sing and play too.

Wentworth seemed to be transported with my proposal. He flew to the harpsichord. He made me chuse my songs, though I had left the choice to him. Never in my life did he appear half so agreeable to me. Yet he is still, by fits, melancholy; and falls into such reveries,  
that

that he absolutely moves my compassion.

My uncle retired to dress after our musical performances were over. Harriet, by coming to tell my aunt that the milliner had sent some bandboxes for her inspection, occasioned her absence, so that Mr. Wentworth and I were once again left by ourselves, but we made little or no use of this opportunity. He opened his mouth several times, as if he wanted to speak, but closed it again without uttering a syllable. He comes here now almost every day. We converse with the utmost freedom, yet I think, nay, I am sure, that he treats me in a different manner from what he did before that incident. He is infinitely more assiduous, more attentive; he watches every motion; he really does nothing else but watch me, and often disconcerts me by his vigilance. However,

ever, if I am disconcerted, it is with being over pleased. In short, I don't know how to define the satisfaction which I feel in his society.—There is one very extraordinary peculiarity in his behaviour: He never will, though frequently asked both by my uncle and aunt, be of our party to any public diversions; but he has consented to go with us to see Richmond gardens the first fine day. My uncle is very desirous to have me see those gardens, and if we have some more fine spring mornings, such a little excursion will be very agreeable. Adieu, my dearest Annabell: only think what a letter here is from

Your ever affectionate

L. W.

L E T.

## L E T T E R XXIII.

From the same to the same.

**Y**OU have not wrote to me, my dearest Annabell, this half year, I was going to say. What are you doing? I hope you are not ill ; if illness has been the cause of your silence, I shall be sensibly affected : but I will hope the best.

We went yesterday to Richmond. The day favoured us, and our party proved very agreeable. My uncle rode on horseback ; my aunt, Miss Blonden, Wentworth and, I filled my uncle's post-coach. Wentworth and I sat opposite to each other. I smiled on him, and he seemed to be happily situated, but every now-and-then relapsed into his melancholy fits. My aunt is fond of him : he pays her all possible civility, but he

I is



is attentive only to me. Harriet begins to observe him pretty closely, I think, but he appears to be aware of her. She was taken off from her observation to day by Sir John Freme, a friend of my uncle's, whom we met with accidentally at the gardens, and who finding that Wentworth kept close to me, attached himself to Harriet, to her no small delight.

Wentworth seeing Harriet engaged, and her watchful eyes taken off from him, took upon himself the care of shewing me every thing worthy of observation in that delightful place, which must be more and more pleasant as the season advances. My aunt said that it was too early in the year to visit gardens; but my uncle added, that he thought a little air would do me good, and put some rouge into my cheeks, as I had looked very pale since my last illness. Wentworth seemed to feel, with my uncle, the

necessity of doing something to complete my recovery; and as we walked side by side, asked me often if I was weary, taking me by the hand, at the same time pressing it gently, and putting it through his arm, that I might rest upon it. I was charmed with his care of me; but I was shocked at this freedom. I drew my hand back, but not in an angry way. He threw his eyes round to see if the apprehension of being observed had occasioned the removal of it: finding that we were quite by ourselves, my uncle and aunt having stopped to speak to somebody, will you not lean on my arm, Miss Wheatly, said he, tenderly, I am not weary, replied I, seriously: you must be tired, I should imagine, said he in return, for you have walked a great deal, considering you have been so lately ill: nothing is so dangerous as fatiguing exercise. After a moment's hesi-

hesitation, accompanied with a sigh, but you are not pleased with me to day, continued he ; you will not accept of my little services. Why do you think so, replied I, am I not equally pleased with you every day? looking chearfully at him: but the footing we are upon will not permit me to take such familiarities with you, Mr. Wentworth.

That's a distracting reflection, said he, with great emotion.

Ay, but what I say is too true, nevertheless, replied I, innocently. Pray, what opinion would you have of me, were I to forget myself so far?

I never can look upon you, said he eagerly, but in the most exalted light. You are so infinitely superior to all the rest of your sex, that every thing you say, every thing you do,

has a particular charm in it: and though your anger would cut me to the soul, anger from you would be preferable to the tenderest love from any other woman. Yet such is my cruel fortune, I dare not publicly declare my sentiments, though the concealment of them is attended with the most painful sensations; sensations which are sometimes, very often, too violent to be endured.

With these expressions I was so well pleased that I could make no reply to them; they so deeply affected me that I was ready to faint, I could scarce support myself, my trembling limbs were just going to sink under me. He led me to a seat which happened to be near us. I was really more dead than alive. He strained me to his bosom, with a tenderness which is not to be expressed, and I could hear him say, softly, loveliest, dearest Lucy, Heaven

ven knows how I doat on you. He did not think that I heard these few fond words, nor intended that I should have heard them.

I recovered by degrees: I withdrew myself from those arms which seemed willing to hold me for ever. I said nothing to him, but I looked, I suppose, all that my heart felt.

He would not let me go. He told me, tenderly, that I was not yet strong enough to take such walks, that I must rest on him, and that to see me thus faint and ill was worse than death to him.

I then suffered him to direct my steps as he pleased. I gave myself up to the greatest joy I had ever known, the joy arising from an assurance that I was truly beloved by the most amiable man in the world. I leaned on that dear arm which had



once bravely defended me, and now so kindly supported me when I was just sinking under my weakness, and the most powerful of all passions.

He seemed transported with my compliance, though I still spoke not a word to him. He kissed my hand, which he held in his, a thousand times.

I began to recover both my reason and my strength. Once more I took my arm from him, and told him that I was better. To oblige him to let me go, I added, that my uncle and aunt were near us. Do not be angry with me, then, Miss Wheatly, said he softly; consider the wretchedness of my situation—Oh! forgive, and pity me.

I do, replied I hastily, I do both: but let me go now, Mr. Wentworth, we have been but too long by ourselves.

I ran from him as fast as my strength would give me leave, and found my aunt looking about for us.

Wentworth, seeing me confused, and at a loss, told her that I was fatigued with walking, and had been ready to faint, and desired that I might get into the coach directly. She complied, and he seated himself by my side, omitting nothing which he thought would contribute to make this little journey agreeable to me.

When we came home, and when I had time to reflect on what had passed, I blamed myself extremely for my behaviour. Yet when I considered that if what Wentworth had hinted be real; if he loves me, but is prevented by a secret reason from declaring his passion, how much he is to be pitied I know but too well by what I feel myself.

Let me, my dear, receive your  
most serious thoughts speedily upon  
a subject so truly interesting to

Your affectionate

L. W.

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L E T T E R XXIV.

Miss GRIERSON to Miss WHEATLY.

**H**AVING been at Fair-grove  
Manor, my dearest Lucy, I was  
prevented from receiving your's so  
soon as I otherwise should. I found  
my dear mother there, far from well.  
A return of her old disorder, though  
not so violent as the last, calls for all  
my duteous care and closest attend-  
ance.

When I consider, my amiable  
friend, the great change which they  
must

must feel who are arrived to an extreme old age, even though it is tolerably healthy, and free from the numberless evils to which the last stage of life is particularly subject, we cannot, I think, do too much towards lessening the cares, alleviating the pains, and amusing the minds of our honoured relations, who have spent their health and their strength in nourishing and improving us: surely, my Lucy, it is our duty, and should be a pleasure to endeavour, by every method in our power, to lighten the weight of their years, when even the grasshopper becomes a burthen.— But the aged alone are not the people who stand in need of our assistance: the youthful also, the lively, and even the excellent Miss Wheatly demands at present my tenderest care—Oh! Lucy, Lucy! what letters are your two last? I am obliged to confess that they have given me an anxiety which I never imagined

I should feel upon your account: how careful, how very careful, my dear, ought we to be, to prevent ourselves from listening too readily to the other sex; from being affected too much by any attractions in them, before we know whether we can prudently indulge sentiments in their favour.—And certainly, Miss Wheatly, you cannot be too much upon your guard with a man so very seducing, I may say, in his person and manners, as this Mr. Wentworth is: I do not mean by saying so, my dear, that he has any improper designs upon you; nor do I know that he has not: but still, whatever be his intentions, he undoubtedly admires you, or appears to admire you, to a very great degree: and as for you, all innocent, unguarded, and possessed of the greatest sensibility, your tender heart can no longer resist the passion with which he has inspired you.

Only



Only consider a little, my dear, look into yourself for a few moments. If he should not be sincere in his professions, think to what lengths so amiable, so artful a man may carry you before you are aware. On the contrary, if he is seriously and deeply in love with you, and if a secret reason hinders him from declaring his passion in the open, unreserved manner in which all professions from men of character to women of character ought to be made, what a world of trouble will you inflict upon yourself, by thus cherishing an inclination which, let the object of it be ever so deserving, will never apologize for your imprudence, nor administer consolation to you, in case you should, disappointed, be obliged to give it up.

You talk continually of Wentworth's respect, and of his diffidence; the more respectful, the more diffident

dent he appears, the more dangerous he certainly is. Of the open, the avowed libertine, my dear, I should not be in the least afraid: I could trust you with Sir George, were he ten times more agreeable than you describe him: but this Wentworth has so soft, so submissive a way, is so anxious about your health, and has so many affectionate cares for you, so many tender assiduities about you, that I really tremble when I reflect upon your delicate and critical situation.

Left to yourself in a manner; (for I don't yet find that either your uncle or your aunt suspect either you or your lover at present) I begin to fear indeed, my sweet Lucy, that your relations are too negligent about you. Why will you not endeavour to exert yourself? Why will you not call your reason to your aid before it is too late? Believe me, the longer  
you

you forbear to resist, the less able you will be to make resistance. I too well know what it is to be under the influence of a tender inclination; but yet, my Lucy, I never suffered myself to go such lengths as you have gone till I was convinced of the integrity of Capt. Wilson's intentions, and had secured my father's approbation of his addresses to me. I don't mention this circumstance to boast of my own discretion; the wisest of us, Heaven knows, when attached to a beloved object, often wants strength to resist the importunities of an amiable man who appears perfectly devoted to us. But yet I should imagine, that notwithstanding our sensibility, and the natural gentleness of our sex, a young woman, properly educated, like my Lucy, ought to have strength enough to reject the solicitation of the most desirable man in the world, when by

en-

encouraging him she hazards her honour and her peace.

This is a long lecture, you will say, from your Annabell.—Believe me, my sincere affection for you has occasioned it.—I have been the more free in the communication of my sentiments, because I cannot help being fearful lest my dear Lucy, from the extreme innocence of her intentions, and the unquestionable goodness of her heart, which throbs for the slightest affliction in another, should inadvertently and involuntarily be drawn into connections which may call up blushes in her cheeks for having encouraged them, or which, by ending in disappointment, may embitter her future happiness with the upbraidings of recollection.

Farewell, my dear, my beloved friend: excuse every thing which can possibly prove offensive in this letter.

letter.—Do me the justice to think, that when I blame your conduct with the most severity, I love you with the greatest affection. But let what will happen to you, still do me the justice to believe that I am your ever faithful

A. G.

P. S. It will not be in my power to write to you so frequently as I have done, at least for the present, for the reasons mentioned at the beginning of this letter, which will, I know, have weight with my Lucy.

P. S. I have been so earnest in my admonitions, which will, I hope, make some impression on you, that I forgot to take notice of several things which have since occurred to me. If there was not something very improper in Mr. Wentworth's coming so often to your uncle's, why  
did



did not Mr. Farnham sometimes accompany him?—That looks suspicious. If he approved of his addresses to you, he would certainly call now and then and pay a visit to Mr. Mordaunt, after having been so politely invited. Besides, my dear, if you really are so attached to Wentworth on account of his virtues only, why cannot you like Lord William, who is, you say, both good and agreeable? This Lady Julia too, methinks there is something mysterious about her. Be very particular, my, dear in your observations, and send them all to me immediately.

L E T.

## L E T T E R XXV.

Miss WHEATLY to Miss GRIERSON.

I WANT words, my dearest Annabell, to express the sense I have of your affectionate friendship, of your tender concern for your Lucy ; who, though she may have been rather too much intoxicated with the admiration of the only man in the world whom she has yet met with capable of pleasing her, will, be assured, not intentionally so far forget herself as to do any thing unworthy of the education which her dear, valuable mother bestowed upon her, to render herself undeserving of the friendship and prudent advice of her worthy Miss Grierson. I have indeed taken the advice of my kind friend : I have behaved to Wentworth with so much reserve, that he is half distracted ; but I will not de-

ceive you, my Annabell, I began to be thus discreet before I received your excellent, your never-enough-to-be-esteemed admonitions. He still continued his frequent visits, and was so very assiduous about me, that the family began to take notice of them. I am amazed they did not take notice of them before.

The other morning, at breakfast, they taxed me pretty home. So, Miss Wheatly, said my aunt, with a mighty grave air, Mr. Wentworth then, I find, is your favourite.

What, cried my uncle, is my friend Harry to be the man, Lucy—well, he is a very pretty gentleman.

Harriet, with a toss of her head, and a sneer in her countenance, said, that she thought I had a very dull fancy.

I blushed conviction at my uncle and aunt's observations, but could not help smiling at Harriet with a sort of contempt, though sorry to have occasion to behave in that manner to her, and displeased to find myself inclined to behave so. However, as I made no answer, I put a stop to their raillery: on such occasions as these, silence, I think, is always more effectual than any reply. People are not prepared for an obstinate silence, it confounds them; a repartee helps them forward, and furnishes them with new offensive weapons. I therefore let my ralliers alone; when they found that they could get nothing out of me, they kept their wit to themselves.

I had soon, however, a more difficult part to act. In the evening of this day we had much company, tho' not company by which one is laid under any kind of restraint. Wentworth

worth was one of the number. As there were many great talkers, Wentworth and I had no occasion to say much; but, as we looked frequently at each other, I observed, that whenever I turned my eyes from him to any other object, his own were fixed very attentively on a little kind of round card which he held in his hand, and on me, by turns. I saw him thus look at me and the card several times. On a sudden, Miss Blonden, who sat next to him, leaned over, and in a familiar manner was going to take it out of his hand, saying at the same time, while she looked earnestly at me, "tis a prodigious likeness."

You were never more mistaken, Madam, said Wentworth, putting it hastily into his pocket, with a look at once angry and confused. She also reddened with indignation. I, not much better pleased than either  
of



of them, as I imagined myself the subject of this hasty conversation, seemed to want the meaning of it explained by Wentworth, who looked at me in the most submissive manner, as if I had caught him doing something of which he knew I should not approve.

Finding soon an opportunity to come pretty near me, I plead guilty, Madam, said he, in a low voice, and must submit to your displeasure for having attempted those lovely eyes to which no pencil can do justice. I cannot here vindicate myself unobserved, but if you will allow me to see you to-morrow, for a moment, alone—

He stopped, as if he was afraid to go on, and yet wished to receive an answer.—But the request which he made had too much the air of an appointment; besides, I was not  
pleased

pleased with what had passed, though I did not perfectly comprehend it; I therefore made no answer, and he went away.

Next morning, when I was at my musick, he came in. I affected scarcely to observe him; though, at the same time, I was half wild to know the meaning of his behaviour the preceding night.

He advanced towards me, and took out of his pocket the little drawing which he had made, which Harriet had discovered to be so like me, presenting it to me in the most humiliated posture, Will not my offering up to you, Miss Wheatly, said he, what has occasioned your anger, procure my pardon? Your dear image is so deeply graven on my heart, that I want not this resemblance of you to strengthen the impression which it has made on it.  
You

You are indeed ever present to my imagination, and it was that impression which made me almost involuntarily trace your beauties upon the vellum as it lay before me. When I had finished your face, I flattered myself that the copy was not unlike the original; but when the bright original appeared to me last night again, I found that my execution had not been equal to my feelings. Eager, therefore, to mend the fault which I had committed, I snatched an opportunity when I thought the company were too closely engaged in conversation to take notice of me; but, unluckily, I was not sufficiently upon my guard, for Miss Blonden detected me; and soon afterwards, you, Miss Wheatly, expressed so much displeasure in your looks at the liberty which I had presumed to take, that I have not been able to enjoy a moment's peace since.

While

While he was speaking I examined the drawing. 'Tis sweetly done, my Annabell, a very flattering likeness of your Lucy.—It pleased me, but I was not to be pleased, you know, I therefore said nothing; till seeing him continue kneeling before me, I looked at him with a frown, though I was far more inclined to smile.—And to what purpose, said I, should I take this, as you may draw another whenever you please. I am never safe with a man who can expose a picture of me in whatever company he is engaged.

Be assured, Miss Wheatly, replied he, that you may believe me when I promise never to offend you in that way again: the man who could deceive you but in thought, has no pretensions to your favour.

Luckily my aunt came in and relieved me, for I began to be embarrassed;

barassed, and by the arrival of several morning visitors to Mrs. Mordaunt, who dropped in one after another, I found employment enough without talking to Wentworth.

I was pressed to play and sing: I did both, though I was never in a more unmusical humour in my life: nay I had the ill-nature not to ask Wentworth to accompany me. He felt this change in my behaviour to him, and discovered his feelings by an uneasiness in his looks which he did not endeavour to conceal. Seeing, however, no probability of having a private interview with me again that morning, he took his leave as soon as I rose from the harpsichord.

In the evening I received your letter, which did not tend to make me less reserved to him.—Though I still cannot suspect him of forming any improper designs, there is,



I agree with you, a necessity for a great deal of caution in my carriage to him. I have therefore continued my reserved behaviour, and am determined to conquer, if possible, an inclination which may, if not immediately suppressed, prove fatal to my peace.

When he came again, I took very little notice of him. I had never distinguished him in company by any particular civility, I now did not seem to see him at all.—As to him, his eyes were never turned from me; he directed his conversation to me; he took every method in his power to engage my attention to no purpose. I talked to those who were nearest to me, and did not appear to regard him. This coldness, this indifference would, I thought, have driven him away; but it had quite a different effect, for when he found that nothing moved me, that all his  
affidu-

assiduities to please, all his endeavours only to be noticed, were inefficacious, he sat down, at a little distance from me, and gave himself up apparently to despair.

There happened to be several very chearful people, besides those at the card-tables, in the room, who chatted upon several laughable subjects, but not a smile could they light up in the countenance of Wentworth. My uncle, at length, observing his dejection, asked what was the matter with him; nay more, came and told me, that poor Harry was quite out of spirits, and enquired of me if I knew what ailed him.

I only smiled at my uncle, and I fancy that he thought we had had a slight difference, which is not uncommon among lovers, and which would soon be made up again. But Wentworth did not find the differ-

rence between us so soon accommodated. I still avoided him, and prevented him from making use of every opportunity which he seized to speak to me. I addressed myself to the several ladies who were present, and baffled every scheme which he formed to engage me in conversation with him.—In the same style I went on the following day, though I suffered cruelly for my chilling behaviour.

When he was gone, when I retired to the enjoyment of my own thoughts, his dear image, Annabell, adorned with all his uncommon graces, presented itself with Fancy's eye. I saw him before me with his attractive air, his winning smiles, his respectful down-cast eyes, full of the most amiable diffidence. With Fancy's ear, I heard the frequent tender sighs, which issued from the bottom of his heart, after I began to treat him with so much coolness.

The sighs which issued from him, while he staid, affected me so much, that it was with great difficulty I suppressed mine: I was, I believe, as little inclined to pleasantry as he was, though I strove to assume an air of chearfulness: I only took care not to encourage any gallantry in the other gentlemen. I would not my dear, have him think that I am disposed to coquetry, for the world.

On one of the days, Lord William was present, and sought every opportunity to entertain me alone, but I gave him none. He is, I believe, a worthy man; I never heard any thing against his character, nor yet have I heard of his having done any extraordinary good actions. A man only negatively good, cannot be esteemed by your Lucy, my dear.

And so child, methinks I hear you say, because you have not met with a man that is any thing more than negatively good, you must take one who is positively bad, that is, Wentworth, for I am sure you begin to have a strange opinion of him. But remember, my dear Annabell, his humanity to farmer Gates, and his unlimited benevolence to the distressed objects in our neighbourhood: will not his generous actions prove the goodness of his heart: will they not convince you that he has the best heart in the world.

But I know you will say, that he had a design in what he has done.

Well, be it so; but I cannot find it out. He makes no use of it at present. He is contented to sit, and grow melancholy before me. You cannot think how much he is altered



tered in these two or three days: he has quite lost his colour, and all that enlivening chearfulness which rendered him at times so vastly agreeable. I agree with you my Annabell, that his declining to make proposals to my uncle, has more than once created suspicions in me, and given me great disquietude. But as he told me in Richmond-gardens, that he dared not, I imagine that there are family reasons which prevent him at present, and which he hopes will, in time, be removed. From this declaration, which I attributed to the singularity of his circumstances, I received, I own, a great deal of pleasure, and if the difficulties which obstruct our union should never be overcome, I think I could submit to the disappointment with resignation. I am not, I hope, so desperately entangled; but I am sure that I cannot consent, upon any terms, to be the wife of any other man. I will,

therefore, never give Lord William the slightest encouragement.

From my indifference to Lord William, Wentworth, I fancy, had flattered himself with hopes, for he at last seized a moment of privacy with me, though I most studiously endeavoured to avoid him. Stopping me, as I was going out of the room, For the love of Heaven, Miss Wheatly cried he, hear me: what have I inadvertently done to cause such a total change in your behaviour to me.

I do not know, Mr. Wentworth, said I, with a very reserved air, what you mean—I treat you with the civility with which I treat other gentlemen who visit at my uncle's: and you have not the least right, continued I, with all the firmness I was mistress of, to demand more.

It

It is too true, replied he with a sigh that seemed to rend his bosom; would to Heaven that I could justly demand more; but will you not give me a little time. You have been kind enough to look upon me with more favourable eyes than you do at present.

But I blame myself extremely for having done so, said I hastily; because I have been guilty of an error once, must I be expected to continue in it? No, Mr. Wentworth, when you are more explicit, I shall know better how to act, till then, you must be content with me as I am.

I blushed excessively, my dear, for having said so much: I accused myself of having betrayed an indelicacy of disposition, a desire to hear proposals which ought always to come from the other sex freely, un-

asked, and, apparently, unwished for. But my words could not be recalled: nor, to tell you the truth, was I inclined to recall them, for he answered me immediately with a spirit, and a satisfaction in his looks which had not appeared in them for many days, be assured, Miss Wheatly, cried he, taking my hand, and pressing it ardently, that the uneasiness I suffer in being obliged to conceal the reality of my situation, is almost insupportable. Only imagine then, how much that uneasiness is increased by your cruel indifference."

Oh! my Annabell, if you had but seen his fine eyes, languishing with love, and with suspense; if you had but heard his trembling but harmonious voice, you would have felt for us both. However, I drew away my hand from him, and left him,  
 still

still resolved to sustain my apparent reserve.

I have a thousand apologies to make for writing such tedious letters; but you desired that I would be very minute in the communication of every thing which happens to me, and I always obey my Annabell with particular pleasure, because I always wish to prove myself

Her affectionate

L. W.

P.S. I am quite ashamed, my dear, for having wrote so long a letter, without having mentioned the worthy Mrs. Mertins. It is but too evident how much my attention has been engrossed by my own affairs, which are of so inferior a nature to those in which you are employed,



ployed, that I blush whenever I think of myself.

How humane, how christian-like it is, to watch over the infirmities of age, with no other view but to alleviate the pain, and to lighten the burthen, which, as you very justly observe, are likely to be felt by those who are descending into the vale of years. Had Heaven been graciously pleased to have spared my best of mothers, oh! Annabell, how blest should I have been, in endeavouring to preserve her life, and to make it happy! I should not then have been the wretched thing I am. Tears will not permit me to proceed.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXVI.

From the same to the same.

W H E N I concluded my last letter, I was in a very melancholy train of thinking, and as I have just heard a narration of a melancholy kind, I will send it to you.

When my Amy came to dress me to-day, her eyes, I observed, were swelled with crying. I hastily demanded the cause of her tears, fearing that she also, as she is young and pretty, might have met with a seducer. I was the more confirmed in my suspicions, as she was inclined to evade an answer to my inquiries, by saying that she believed she had got a cold in her eyes; but the peace of this little family, for I love my nurse, her mother, is so dear to me

me that I cannot see it disturbed without endeavouring to restore it. I therefore insisted upon her telling me immediately what had happened: after some hesitation, she said that she supposed I had often heard her mother mention a sister much younger than herself, who had come up to London for a service, and in the family where she lived had met with a young man, a distant relation of her mistress who had taken a liking to her, and married her. This young gentleman, continued Amy, for he was educated like one, and bred to no kind of business, was the son of a man possessed of an estate of about three or four hundred a year, but upon marrying my aunt against his consent, his father disinherited him, though during his life he gave him leave to come to his house, but would on no account see either his wife or children, and he had six or seven before his father died. With going  
back-

backward and forward to his father, and writing sometimes for the lawyers, and now and then translating an odd thing for the booksellers, while his wife took in a little plain work, he made a shift to subsist, though not without running in debt; for he imagined that as his father let him come to his house he would at least forgive him, and leave him something, if not all his fortune: but the old man had sworn he never would leave him but a shilling, and accordingly kept his word. This distressed them greatly, as they had now a large family to provide for, all of whom, except the eldest girl, were too young to be of any service to them, and she was about sixteen, tall of her age, and very pretty. To add to their misfortunes, the father of this wretched family lost his sight after a bad fever, which had gone through the house, and of which his wife had barely recovered, when his land-  
lord

lord, who had patience longer than they could have expected, in hopes of his paying when his father died, finding himself disappointed, seized the few goods they were worth for his rent. Other creditors taking example, arrested the poor man, unable to follow his former employment for want of sight, and threw him into prison. The night before last, as Sally, their eldest daughter was returning home from the prison, where she had carried to her miserable father all that her poor, sick mother could spare him, she was met by an elderly woman in the park, who had much the appearance of a gentlewoman, and who observing her in tears, asked her the cause of her trouble; and upon the poor girl's telling her, pretended the greatest pity for her situation, saying, that if she would go home with her, she had a very charitable lady at her house, who would, she was sure, give



give her something to relieve her family, adding, that she herself would also contribute towards it. The innocent, unsuspecting girl, quite delighted at having met with so much good fortune, readily followed her; but as soon as she was within the doors, there came a gentleman to them into a room upon the ground floor, who, after a little while, began to be very rude to her: upon which she cried out several times with all her force, but being in a bye-street, she was afraid that she should not be heard by any body. However, after a little bustle in the passage, the door of the room in which they were, was burst open by another gentleman, who went to take her from the first, asking her the cause of her cries, which she told him, and begged him to get her out of that house into which she had just been decoyed. Upon this the person who had used her so ill, drew his sword, and swore  
in

in the most violent manner that he would never give her up tamely. Her deliverer drew his also, and soon disarmed his adversary, and led her out of the house, called a coach, and putting her into it, made her tell him all her dismal story, with which he was much affected; but when he saw the misery of her mother, the wretchedness of their apartment, and heard the cries of the younger children for bread, he gave them five guineas, and this morning went to the prison, paid the father's debts, brought him home himself to his transported family, and has promised to allow them half a guinea a week till Sally, to whom he has given a small sum, that she may learn to make manteaus, is able by her work to assist in supporting her relations.

Both Amy and I wept at this recital. I was so charmed with the benevo-

benevolent heart of this stranger, that I wished to know who he was; but she could not inform me. Why then, Amy, said I, opening my purse, did you not tell me of the misfortunes of your family before, that I might, by relieving them, have prevented some of the above-mentioned from begging. Amy replied, that she had been ignorant of them herself till within these two days: that she had found them out by accident, and should then have ventured to tell me, had I not already been so very kind both to her and her mother, that she was quite ashamed to trouble me any more.

I never think it a trouble, my good girl, said I, to relieve the necessitous; and this is so very pitiable a case, that I think it deserves the most speedy assistance. Go and take this, added I, giving her something; get advice for your aunt's health;  
when

when that is restored, I will think of putting her into some little business, that she may be able to support her husband, who has suffered enough for the love of her.—But come hither Amy, continued I, calling her back, don't let your cousin Sally go to the gentleman's house for her allowance, which he is so good as to give them : if he is agreeable (here a sigh escaped me) it is still less proper for her to go to him : nothing so truly touches the heart as benevolence !

Oh! dear Madam, said Amy, she is not to go, for my little cousin Charles is to meet him at the corner of a house by the Park, on those days when he is to receive his bounty. I forgot to tell you, Madam, that the young gentleman sent for a doctor to my aunt, and gave him money, and asked him if he could do nothing to help my uncle's fight,  
for

for he is not quite dark, and charged him to take the greatest care of both. Sure, Madam, he must be an angel of a man.

And now, my dear, what a long, what a melancholy tale have I told; but I know that it will warm your heart as much as it has warmed mine, to hear that there is in this age of levity and dissipation, and in London too, the seat of pleasure (a young man of fortune he must be) who is willing and ready to rescue beauty in distress, without being first struck with it, and can feel so sensibly the miseries of poverty in others, without ever having known them himself.

My hand is tired, as your eyes probably will be, I therefore hasten to conclude with my assurances of being every our's, most affectionately,

L. W.



LETTER XXVII.

From the same to the same.

**I** HAVE received the most obliging invitation imaginable from Lady Julia, to spend the day with her, and I accepted it.

Notwithstanding the infinite pleasure which I always take in seeing Wentworth, his present dejection, which I dare not endeavour to remove, gives me a thousand uneasy sensations, I was therefore glad to change the scene a little.

She ran to meet me with a satisfaction which was very visible in her whole air. We spent the time before dinner at her harpsichord and in looking over curiosities, of which she has a great number, ranged in a manner extremely elegant, in her closet:

closet: but imagine my astonishment to see, among a large collection of fine portraits in miniature, Wentworth's picture, so excessively well done, that if I had not been greatly struck at finding it there, I must have taken notice of it for the beauty of its execution.

It was with difficulty, my dear, that I preserved my presence of mind at this unexpected sight. How I looked, I cannot tell, but I certainly felt my face in a glow, and such a trembling at my heart, that I was ready to sink. Luckily for me, Lady Julia is not a woman of quick observation, so that I had time to recover myself a little: but willing, however, to avail myself of this opportunity to procure some intelligence, after I had admired a few other pictures, I stopped at that which had so much alarmed me.

Mr.

Mr. Wentworth's, I think, said I, Lady Julia. Yes replied she, don't you think it is very like him, it is esteemed so by my Lord, who presented it to me, and is reckoned to be very highly finished.

It is indeed, my Annabell, so striking, so charming a representative of him, that I cannot help envying her for the possession of it, while she, to all appearance, quite easy about the copy and the original, turned from it to shew me other pictures which in her opinion merited my attention: but you may be sure, as my spirits were in such a flutter, I was not capable of making very judicious remarks upon them.

Who, after all, can she mean by my Lord, except her father the Earl of——? and why he should give her Wentworth's picture is, I confess, beyond my comprehension. I could  
scarce

scarce take my eyes from it, nor my thoughts, one moment. I looked over the rest of the things hastily, and returned again to this bewitching miniature. I admired the eyes, the mouth, the hair, and I believe, if any body but Lady Julia had observed my behaviour, I should have been thought very extravagant in my praises. But indeed, my Annabell, I said the more, in hopes of drawing something out of her Ladyship, which might help to clear up these strange obscurities. She did not, however, take my meaning, or else she was not inclined to make any advantage of it. She joined with me in tracing out the beauties of it, with the greatest good humour; and with a smile of approbation at my being so pleased, said, I am vastly glad, Miss Wheatly, that this picture gives you so much satisfaction: I shall, for the future, have a better opinion of my own judgment.

Flattering girl! My judgment, did she know the truth, arises from my heart, and not from my head. I had rather have a very ordinary picture of the man I love, if the exact likeness is preserved, than the most masterly portrait in the world of any other person.

However, my dear, from chatting about the picture, we came to talk about the man.

Mr. Wentworth has no bad person, said I, he would make a good whole length.

I think so, said Lady Julia, he is generally allowed to be handsome: both his eyes, and his hair, which is reckoned prodigiously fine, may be seen to perfection in a miniature: but the dignity of his air, and the graces of his manner, can only be shown in a whole length.

He



He is a very accomplished man, returned I; excells in music, and I believe, draws very well.

I don't know that, said she, with a blush, and a little hesitation, I never yet heard him play.

Here she made a full stop, and appeared to be so confused, that though I wished to pursue the conversation, I felt a kind of pity for her, which hindered me from resuming it abruptly, as she seemed rather willing to turn it upon another subject.

Thus, you see, Annabell, every thing conspires to keep me in suspense: a suspense, which will, I fear, never be removed.

Just before we sat down to table, she introduced me to the Earl of—,

her father, and Sir Edward Balchen, a relation of the late Countess. The former is a very polite, agreeable man, of his age, but the latter is one of the handsomest men I ever saw, and extremely conversable. He appeared to be very much taken with my person, which though he praised in high terms, much higher than it deserved, there was yet a delicacy in his panegyrics which prevented them from being fulsome.

Will you not think me immoderately vain, my dear, for talking in this way? but have a little patience with me: I hope I shall mend: only consider me, I beseech you, as a young person always bred in the country, where I saw but few people, who never troubled themselves whether I was handsome or ugly; and just arrived in town all at once, where I had never been seen before, and where every new face, merely from  
the

the novelty of it, has charms: you will, then, not so much wonder at the fuss which is made about me. On the contrary you will, I really think, pardon me for thus speaking of myself, when I tell you that I found no pleasure in this Sir Edward's flatteries, neither did I take the least joy in looking at his person, though I did all proper justice to it in my own mind.—How superior, I thought, is Wentworth's countenance; what an expression of sensibility, candour, humanity and goodness is there in it; his benevolent heart is pictured in every feature of his face.—

Yet after all, there is one thing which astonishes me prodigiously. I am certain that Wentworth admires me: I am certain that he loves me: seldom however, or rather never, do I hear him say any thing in praise of that person, with which every other

man appears to be half enamoured. Perhaps he discovers the little vanity which lies lurking within me, and wishes to cure me of it: at least, he will not help to increase it.—Certainly, to be vain of external beauties, is a very great weakness. Where is the advantage of beauty, if we are not induced by the possession of it to become better? Those who have a striking exterior, ought to be particularly careful not to do any thing to lessen the favourable opinion which the generality of people are apt to entertain of them, meerly from the agreeableness of their outward appearance.

But I shall tire you to death with my reflections. To return therefore to the conversation, as it was confined to no particular topic, and as I was still desirous, still eager to introduce the subject in which I felt myself most interested, in hopes of making some important discoveries, I took  
occa-

occasion to praise the furniture of Lady Julia's closet, and to admire the lively likeness of Mr. Wentworth's picture, which I had just seen there.

Yes, said the Earl, I think it a very good one: 'tis one of the best in Julia's collection, added he, smiling at his daughter, whose cheeks were immediately covered with crimson blushes.

Sir Edward observed this change of countenance in his fair relation, and smiled at it. Wentworth, said he, is one of the most agreeable and most worthy gentlemen whom I have the pleasure of knowing: and answers more truly, in every respect to that appellation, than any man I can at present name: my pretty coz. therefore, need not blush at being in possession of his picture.



Had Sir Edward, at that moment, happened to have turned his eyes on me, he would have seen a much greater change in my face, than he had before remarked in Lady Julia's. I cannot determine whether I was more pleased at hearing Wentworth so handsomely spoken of, or surprized at his having such close connections with this family. However, I asked no more questions. I was heartily frightened lest I should have occasioned some suspicion, and as heartily rejoiced to get home.

There is certainly something unaccountably odd in all these things. I sit and reflect upon them sometimes till I am hardly capable of forming any judgment about any thing.

Adieu, my dearest Annabell: write soon, and say something, if you can,  
to

[ 201 ]

to fix the wavering opinions, and to  
cheer the dejected spirits of your

Ever affectionate friend

L. W.

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L E T T E R XXVIII.

From the same to the same.

**O**H, my Annabell! I am absolutely out of breath—I am impatient to tell you that Wentworth, my amiable, my valuable Wentworth, was the man who rescued poor distressed Sally, and who saved her suffering family from ruin. It was quite by accident that I heard this.

I have told you already, that I sent Amy to her aunt, and bade her go frequently to see her. After hav-

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ing had a house full of people, a few days ago (among whom Wentworth appeared, but as I still kept my reserved behaviour, he only sighed and withdrew) when my maid attended me at night, she began to pay her gratitude to me, with all the simplicity which is natural to her, for my kindness to her relations. When she had finished what her heart had dictated, "dear Madam, continued she, who do you think that fine young gentleman was who saved my cousin, and now helps to keep her father and mother? it was Mr. Wentworth to be sure."

Mr. Wentworth, said I!—my face glowed while I repeated his name.—How came you to know that? are you sure you are not mistaken?

Yes indeed, Madam, replied she; for as I was going to my aunt's to day, I met little Charles in the street;  
and

and as we went along together, he pulled my gown, and cried, "there, cousin Amy, there is the good gentleman who is so kind to my poor father and mother."—Why, are you sure that's he, said I; I know that gentleman. "Do you, said he, well I am glad of that, because he is so very good: now you shall see me pull off my hat to him."—He did so, and Mr. Wentworth smiled at the child and looked quite good-natured at him; but I believe he did not much like that I should see him, for he said, there's my good boy, go along, and turned from us down another street: now, you know, Madam, I can't be mistaken, for I see Mr. Wentworth every day, but I don't think that he knew me:—well, he is the best of men to be sure: his servants quite adore him: they say a thousand handsome things of him: they say, that he will often stop in the street, when he is going  
to

to the opera or play, and give all he has about him to people in want, and then go home for more.— Here she ended, and I bade her leave me.—

Oh! Annabell, can I any longer after this give pain to a heart which feels, and relieves the woes of others? No, I can never believe any thing bad in him; he is, perhaps, unfortunate, but certainly he does not deserve to be so.—

I spent a restless night: I never closed my eyes: I rose quite disturbed. Shall I tell you all? I staid at home the whole morning, in hopes of seeing Wentworth: may I also add, that I almost died with impatience to behold the man who had behaved in so godlike a manner to his fellow-creatures: but he came not; and I began to think that he had, wearied with my indifference,  
 either



either conquered his inclination, or, at least, that he was endeavouring to do so by absence. I then gave him up: but you cannot suppose that my spirits were raised by this agitation of my mind.

My aunt and Harriet were engaged abroad; I also was engaged to go with them, but could not bear the thoughts of visiting; neither could I apply myself in their absence to any thing which would give a turn to my tormenting thoughts. I played, read and wrote, but my harpsichord, my books and my pen, all proved alike unable to amuse me. I took up my work at last, and had but just sat down to it, when Wentworth entered. He started back at seeing me alone. He had not, for some time, seen me without company.— I cried eagerly, pray come in, Mr. Wentworth, you have been so taken up with giving assistance to Mr. Clavil's

Clavil's family, that I think it long since I saw you.

He bowed respectfully at this little compliment: but I saw that he was disconcerted by the discovery which I had made of his extensive liberality.

I wished to see you, continued I smiling, to thank you for your extreme kindness to those poor sufferers: they are related to my good nurse, and to my Amy, her daughter.

Had I known that you interested yourself in their affairs, Madam, said he, I should have been still more induced to give them all the assistance in my power.

You never, I am sure, replied I, want any inducement to do good.— You must know, now, that nothing gives my heart so sincere a transport  
as

as to hear of benevolent actions, and when those actions are performed by a person of whom I would willingly entertain a favourable opinion, the satisfaction which I feel upon the occasion, is, I own, too great for concealment.

He looked earnestly at me. I am happy, replied he, in having Miss Wheatly only wish to think well of me.—

Here he stopped.—

Then you may enjoy that happiness, said I, to its utmost extent; for no one ever more earnestly wished to have reason to esteem Mr. Wentworth, than I do.

As I spoke these words with an eagerness and sincerity which could not be mistaken, they affected him extremely. He fetched a deep sigh,  
looked

looked at me with the most passionate tenderness, caught my hand, and pressing it to his lips, held it there a considerable time, while some tears, which he could not retain, fell upon it. He then let it go, rose up, and walked up and down the room without speaking. I was no less moved, and had recourse to my handkerchief to dry my eyes.—He saw the tender proofs of my concern with emotion. He sat down again by me and fixed his eyes for some time on me, in the the most affecting manner. Amiable creature, said he at last softly to himself: and then aloud, oh ! Miss Wheatly, might I but open my heart to you, with the freedom I wish to do, then would you know how it beats to thank you for this unexpected goodness to me this day, which, coming upon me so suddenly after your late coolness, almost overpowers my senses. Yet, were I to lose my reason upon such  
an

an occasion, the exquisite happiness which I now feel would be well purchased with the loss of it.

He looked, I thought, and talked as if his mind was really disordered. To compose therefore his disturbed thoughts, and to give a turn to them, I asked him to go with me to the harpsichord. The cheerfulness of the music, for I took care to chuse lively airs, as we were both but too much inclined to the pathetic, together with my vivacity, which now returned with double force, dispelled the gloom which at our first meeting hung over him, but left a kind of pleasing melancholy, which only served to render him a thousand times more amiable than ever.

My uncle came in soon after we began our little concert. He seemed pleased to see us so well together,  
to



to use his own words.—He laughed at me, but he said nothing particular about our being found together, when Wentworth was gone.

And now, my Annabell, my dearest friend, will you still blame your Lucy for bestowing her pity, her tenderest compassion on a man so very worthy of her heart, from the extreme goodness of his own; and who, she believes, loves her almost beyond reason.—

Tell me, my dear Miss Grierson, tell me freely what you think. I may yet be blinded by a too partial inclination: but I am sure, that if you could but have seen Wentworth's distraction, you would have had feelings in his favour nearly as strong as those of your

Ever affectionate

L. W.

## L E T T E R XXIX.

Miss GRIERSON to Miss WHEATLY.

**Y**OU have, no doubt, thought me either very idle or very negligent, my dear Miss Wheatly : but neither idleness nor negligence has been the cause of my silence.—My grand-mother's disorder has increased ; and my father has had a fever ; so that I have been backwards and forwords ; unsettled every where.

I have said so much to you, my Lucy, against encouraging a passion which you are, I see, perfectly unable to conquer, that what I have to say will only be the repetition of what I have said so often, that you begin not to heed me. Yet I must, from the great regard I have for you, remind you once more, that those men who are the most humane and bene-

benevolent, are the most capable also of feeling the tenderer passions, and the least able to resist them : for that very reason they are the properest objects to inspire them.

Is it possible, however, my Lucy, that you are still so infatuated as to encourage this man without once asking the advice, or even the opinion of the only relation you have who can be supposed to have any influence over you ; and who would certainly direct your partial judgment by his friendly council.

What have you to apprehend from so prudent a proceeding ? If his sentiments in this affair should happen to differ from your's, you are still as much your own mistress as you was before you consulted him.—By mentioning an affair of so much importance, no less than the happiness of your future days, you do not give him

him any additional authority over you.—

The charity and benevolence of Wentworth are, I own, very great, and doubtless, every person of the same generous turn of mind must feel a real satisfaction at hearing of them. It is, doubtless also, laudable in you to prefer a man of this humane disposition to any other: such a man is an exalted, a god-like character; but still, my Lucy, you are not, surely, obliged to fall in love with him meerly for this good quality alone, if he has not other requisites more essential to your happiness. We are, 'tis true, taught to esteem charity above all things; but were a man to give away all that he possesses to the indigent, and yet at the same time keep a woman of character in suspense, and trifle with a generous heart, by which he is beloved, I cannot think him an object  
worthy

worthy of her affections. Supposing he has a family-reason which prevents him from making a public declaration of his love, certainly he might trust the lady with that reason, and let her be the judge whether it is consistent with her reputation to wait for him.

There must be something very improper, I fear, to occasion Wentworth's mysterious conduct. Your finding his picture in Lady Julia's possession, with her confusion whenever he is mentioned, are riddles which I cannot resolve. I am, I own, inclined to think that there is some connections there, and that it will not be prudent in you to attach yourself too closely to a certain person, till these doubts are cleared up in a satisfactory manner.

These few hints, which may be serviceable to you, my beloved Miss  
Wheatly,



Wheatly, I have thrown together without any regularity, for want of leifure: my esteem, my friendship prompted me to commit them to paper, and it is my sincerest wish that they may not only be kindly received by my Lucy, but properly improved by her.—

I am impatient to receive an answer to this: confider therefore my fituation, and write speedily to your

Ever friendly and well-wifhing

A. G.

P. S. I know full well my Lucy, why you go on in this undetermined ftate: your paffion is rifen to fuch a height, that you dread to look into things.

L E T-

## L E T T E R   X X X .

Miss WHEATLY to Miss GRIERSON.

SINCE the return of my spirits, and my good humour to Wentworth, he has, in some measure, regained his chearfulness, though at times he looks still at me with the tenderest concern in his countenance. He frequently steals my hand when he thinks he is unperceived, and presses it with ardor to his bosom, while his eyes, seemingly full of tears, are fixed on me in such a manner that I can hardly support their glances. Yet I am not offended; how can I be angry with a man who has a secret charm in every thing he does? I am certain, however, that I do not prefer him meerly for his outward graces, but for the internal goodness of his heart, which he possesses in so uncommon, so eminent

a degree, that I do not go about to correct myself, nor esteem that an error, which I ought, according to my notions of morality, to cherish as a virtue.

Yesterday morning I bade Amy bring the two youngest Clavils, both of them boys, that I might see them, as she had told me that they were fine children, and remarkably sensible for their years.

Wentworth accidentally came in, while they were with me; I was quite transported with his behaviour to them. He must be as sweet-tempered and as affable as he is benevolent and bountiful.

The youngest little fellow ran to him as soon as he came in, with as much freedom as he would have ran to a child of his own age; immediately climbed up into his lap, and threw

his innocent hands round his neck, to caress him. Wentworth, far from chiding him, or offering to put him down, encouraged his pretty infantine fondness, and placed him on his knee; holding out his hand at the same time to the elder, who, having been taught to be more respectful, stood at a distance: but the moment he saw that friendly hand stretched out to him, he flew to seize the proffered kindness, and throwing himself down by him on the carpet, kissed his hand over and over, while Wentworth, over-flowing with humanity, raised him from the ground, drew him close to him, and asked him a number of questions about his book, for he has ordered them both to be sent to a school near their father's, and pays all the expences of it. He then gave him some small money, for himself, and said to him, there my friend Charles, take care that your little brother has part of  
your

your cakes. Yes, Sir, replied the boy, smiling in his face, and I shall save something out of it to give to the poor, that I may be like you.

Neither Wentworth nor I could help smiling at this answer of the child: his countenance glowed with modest satisfaction.

When Amy had taken away the children, I said to him, you have the happiest art of conferring benefits, Mr. Wentworth; you at once raise affection and excite respect in the objects who receive them, and rather appear the person obliged, than obliging.

He bowed. His cheeks were flushed with transport. With a voice quite tremulous through excess of pleasure, he said, to deserve your approbation, Miss Wheatly, is the summit of my ambition.—I have indeed



no earthly wish, but to render myself worthy of your esteem, and to be your's for ever.

A rising sigh stopped the progress of his words, which, I am afraid, was returned to him from my bosom; happily, perhaps, for us both, my aunt entered the room.



Your letter is, this moment, brought to me, and has waked me from the delightful reverie into which I was plunged. You are a true friend, my Annabell. Let things turn out how they will, you, I am sure, mean every thing for my happiness. In spite, therefore, of the prejudices of my heart, which still pleads strongly for him who engrosses every part of it so entirely, your advice shall be immediately pursued.

I have had a long conversation with my uncle upon the above subject.  
To

To him I have related every thing which I have communicated to you: and his advice I have asked in the most earnest manner. Yet still, my Annabell, notwithstanding the deference which I pay to your superior judgment, notwithstanding the decisions of my own, which often checked me when I was giving way to the dear delusions of my imagination, I could not help discovering the very great influence which this amiable man has over me. When I had told my tale, and waited my uncle's reply, he shook his head at me, and cried, ah! Lucy, Lucy, it will for all this be as I said at first, Harry Wentworth will be the man.

I sighed, I blushed, I cast down my conscious eyes, which could not bear to meet my uncle's penetrating looks.—He saw, but too plainly, the secret recesses of my soul.

I recovered from this my awkward distress as soon as I could, which my uncle was so far from pitying, that he laughed at me. Indeed, Annabell, he is not the man I wish him to be. His notions are not half refined enough to suit me : he is absolutely a man of the world, and nothing more ; he follows only those maxims which are commonly received in every polite circle in town. However, because I would not blame myself hereafter, for not having been perfectly open with him, I told him my doubts concerning the very particular behaviour of Mr. Wentworth, and very freely asked his advice, that I might regulate my carriage accordingly.

He heard me very patiently, paused a few moments, and then said, why, faith Lucy, this is a knotty affair : perhaps the young rogue has  
got

got a mistress, and half a dozen children to provide for.

You cannot imagine, my dear, how much I was shocked at this supposition of my uncle. I could not, any way, reconcile it to the idea which I had formed of Mr. Wentworth's moral character. I actually could not contain my indignation at his only surmizing such a thing.

A mistress, cried I! Wentworth keep a mistress!—Surely Sir, you do not even suspect him.—

Indeed, cried my uncle, I can't tell; there are so many of these things happen every day. Why, nothing is so common child,—'tis a sign that you know nothing at all of the world, by your discovering so much surprize at it.

Why then, Sir, replied I, if there is no man to be be met with, but one who is loose in his principles, I will never marry.

My uncle laughed at my simplicity, as he called it, and treated me with a kind of contempt which mortified me to the last degree. Had I been laughed at for having said any thing of a ludicrous nature, I could, I think, have borne the ridicule with tolerable patience, but I was, I own, shocked beyond expression, to hear so serious an affair, treated with so much levity.

He saw, I suppose, by my manner, that I was not at all inclined to make my future happiness such a laughing matter as he would have had me, and said, why look'e Lucy, I tell you now what I have told you before, that you must not expect men to be angels in this world.



I shall expect, Sir, said I, if ever I marry, to be united to a man of honour, a man of principles, or else, how can I hope for felicity.

Why, Sir George is a man of honour, said he; and Wentworth may be a man of honour for aught I know to the contrary; and as to your man of principles, that is a very vague expression.—What is morality in one man, may be downright folly and weakness in another: just as they happen to be circumstanced.

I don't understand you, Sir, replied I, shocked at his loose distinction; according to my ideas, a moral man is a man of principles: by saying so, I mean a man who from an innate love of virtue, improved by the most liberal education, is firmly resolved to do every thing in his power to render himself acceptable to his creator, and serviceable

to his fellow-creatures. This Sir, is my idea of a worthy man, and no other, however agreeable he may appear outwardly, will I ever encourage.

Umph ! cried my uncle, with one of his fly looks, why then my dearest Lucy, you stand a pretty fair chance of leading apes : that's all my dear.

Now only think, my Annabell, what a situation I am in : given up, I may say, by the very friend who ought to protect me, and who is really incapable of affording me protection, from his free way of thinking : and attacked in the most persuasive manner by a lover, concerning whose real circumstances I am totally in the dark, and as I am so much in the dark about them, I am quite at a loss to know whether I ought to encourage him or not.

The

The post is going out ; I am therefore prevented from adding any more at present. I can only say that I remain

As sincerely as ever

Your's most affectionately,

L. W.

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L E T T E R XXXI.

From the same to the same.

**I** LEFT off, my dear, before I had done with my uncle. Finding that he could not laugh me out of my extraordinary notions, as he called them, he began to listen with more attention to the questions which I put to him. He is really not, as I have said before, an ill-natured man,

man, nor a man who would, I believe, designedly do any harm; but, unluckily, such a man may do a great deal of mischief without any evil intentions, quite through inadvertence, merely for want of reflecting on the consequences of his conduct. He is entirely carried away by the stream of fashion; and indeed I am apt to imagine, that the dread of being laughed at for not following all the caprices of fashion, is the chief cause of half the absurdities which are committed by both sexes almost every day in town. Not having any principles of their own, nor spirit enough to think for themselves and act accordingly, they do a thousand things which they more than dislike, which they abhor, because they are ashamed of singularity. Young as I am, my Annabell, I begin to be tired of the world already: but to return to Mr. Mordaunt. I asked him if he could possibly assign  
any

any reason for Wentworth's professing so much love for me, and yet forbearing to make it publickly known. He replied that he could not tell ; though, perhaps said he, as his father is not yet returned from abroad, he may not have it in his power to make a settlement suitable to your fortune, if you will not allow, added he, smiling, that he is embarrassed with other attachments.

Have you ever heard that he was ?  
said I.

Not I, said he, hastily. I have always heard him well spoken of : but you are very nice, you know, Lucy.

Not more so than I ought to be, I hope Sir, replied I.—But do you then think it is proper for me to receive visits from him, and encourage  
an



an inclination, till I know whether it is prudent for me to give way to it.

I am afraid child, said my uncle, we are a little too late with our questions, for it is my firm opinion that the inclination has been pretty far encouraged on both sides.

Well but 'tis not too late, (quite tired with his ludicrous manner of talking,) to recall what is past, said I.—

Oh! but it is, replied he; when you are over head and ears in love, it is certainly too late.

My dear uncle, answered I eagerly, do, pray lay aside your railery for a moment, and tell me whether I had not better desire Mr. Wentworth to discontinue his visits 'till they can be authorized by his own family, and by mine.

Umph!

Umph! that is just as you feel yourself inclined, said he.—

But my dear Sir, replied I out of all patience, the world will have a strange opinion of me, if we go on in this manner.

Perhaps it may, cried he, but I suppose from what you just now dropped, that you are above the world.

I don't pretend, Sir, answered I very seriously, to be so far above the world as not to endeavour to act in such a manner as to deserve its approbation in essential points: but in trifles, such as regard dress or public diversions, &c. &c. I think I am at full liberty to follow my own taste, equally indifferent to its censure or applause.

Aye,

Aye, well, said he, and you may as well add your lover into the bargain.—

Was there ever any thing so provoking, my dear? sure one would hardly think it possible that this uncle of mine was the brother of my exalted mother! would she have treated so lightly a subject on which alone depends the future happiness or misery of her child? How sensibly I feel, every hour more and more, the loss of that amiable parent.

I have often had thoughts of returning to the Abbey, to thee, my Annabell, and to all my beloved friends; friends, who, though placed, except thee, in a lower degree of life, yet from the natural simplicity of their manners, and the unaffected goodness of their hearts, give infinitely more satisfaction to your Lucy, than the crowds of unmeaning

meaning faces, which swarm about me here—Still, however, an irresistible attraction in this place while it is the abode of Wentworth.—

Oh! Annabell,

Adieu,

L. W.

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L E T T E R   XXXII.

Miss GRIERSON to Miss WHEATLY.

**I** AM hurt, beyond measure, my dearest Lucy, at Mr. Mordaunt's behaviour, and grieved to find that your excellent heart makes not the impression I wish it should make, either on your uncle or your lover. I very much approve of the resolution you are come to, to oblige the latter

latter to desist from visiting you, at least till he can do so, in a more reputable manner. If you have but strength to persevere in this resolution, I shall have great hopes of you. But yet I don't like the conclusion of your letter. You filled me with flattering expectations of seeing you soon, of seeing you received with the sincerest joy by all your friends, all your dependants: every one of whom would, I am persuaded, be ready almost to give up life for your happiness. You confess that they are honest, good, and all that you can wish them to be; you commend and love your Annabell, yet you can still keep at so great a distance from them and from her, for the sake of a man who, dare I say so? may, perhaps, deceive you at last. I am obliged to break off here. I have this moment received a very unexpected letter; a letter from Capt. Wilson.





I have read it: it is not quite satisfactory: it is filled with doubts and anxieties: but he is arrived safe in England; and so far his letter, by notifying his arrival, has given me great pleasure.

Ah! Lucy! I now know, by my own heart, what you feel. Yet still, my dearest friend, let me intreat you, let me persuade you, by every thing you hold valuable in this world, to dismiss Wentworth, and return to

Your faithful and

Affectionate

A. G.

LET-

## L E T T E R   XXXIII.

Miss WHEATLY to Miss GRIERSON.

'T IS over my dear, and I now sit down to take a retrospect of what is past. I am astonished at myself. You will allow, my dearest Annabell, that I had a very difficult, and let me add, a delicate part to act, to oblige Wentworth to discontinue his visits, and to oblige him in such a manner as not to give unnecessary pain to the heart which doats on me.—To do this was surely no easy matter.

My first step was to fortify myself as much as I could, against his every power to charm: the next was to keep unshaken the resolution, which I had made. As we had been together of late upon so easy a footing, the keeping such a resolution was  
far

far more difficult than I should have found it when I was so greatly upon the reserve to him.

I seized my opportunity when we were not likely to be interrupted. He very innocently, gave me a fair opening.

There had been a few nights ago at my uncle's, by a gentleman just arrived from France, much conversation about a very extraordinary performance in the sentimental way, which had lately made its appearance in that kingdom. As he spoke favourably of it, I expressed a strong desire to see it. Wentworth, ever assiduous to please me, appeared before me with the books in his hand, which he had procured on purpose for me, as they were not to be had of the London booksellers.

I was struck with this mark of his attention, but resolved, however, that  
his

his politeness should not divert me from my purpose. With a mild, but collected voice I said to him; I am much obliged to you Mr. Wentworth for the readiness you have ever shown to entertain me; but—you must excuse me—I dare not accept of any more proofs of your esteem, at least, at present: and you will, I am sure, when you give yourself time to reflect seriously upon my behaviour, rather commend than blame me for it. If you really have the regard which you profess for me, you will cease to visit me till you are authorized to make your visits in a more public manner.

He did not, I am certain, expect such an address from me, for it visibly affected him prodigiously, and he seemed to feel the severest struggles. He threw up his eyes to Heaven, then directed them to me; with the greatest emotion lifted up his hands

hands clasped together, as if he was in an agony.

I felt all that he suffered, probably more ; but I was mistress enough of myself not to discover my feelings ; at least, not my tenderest ones. I sat with my eyes on the floor, waiting for his reply, which was delivered with more calmness than his appearance promised, and was to this effect.

I am but too well convinced, Miss Wheatly, that I ought not to have discovered a passion for you, till I could have made proposals, such as neither yourself nor your family might have blushed to accept of : but where, oh ! where is the human being who has never erred ? where is the man who loves you, that is too weak a word, who doats on you as I do, and could have checked all signs of his passion, when  
he



he became every day more and more sensible of your inestimable worth? It is not your person, all lovely as it appears to me, which has made an impression so deep upon my heart, that neither time nor absence can efface it.—The amiable simplicity of your manners, your excellent understanding, your exquisite sensibility, your exalted way of thinking—these, these are the charms which have touched my very soul. Heaven knows how long I strove to conceal my sensations, because I was but too conscious of the great impropriety of declaring them, in the manner I was unhappily obliged to do: but there was no other resource left for me. I was every day alarmed, lest I should see all that I loved, all that was valuable to me on earth, yielded to another: for while you remained ignorant of my sentiments, how could I hope that you would reserve yourself for me. Still however, though  
I

I may appear often mad by saying so, still I hope and fondly (foolishly I am afraid) expect to see you mine. Oh! Miss Wheatly, if you could only feel by sympathy, the agonies which I have endured upon your account—yet I bore them all, silently bore them till you felt ill: then my fears, my anxieties became too poignant to be supported.—I spoke, and had the happiness to find myself not absolutely hated; but though my declaration was received favourably beyond my expectations, yet I was unhappy. I have so thorough a detestation of any thing that has the least appearance of deceit, especially with regard to the woman whom I love with honour, that I pined in secret because I could not behave to you, in the open, generous manner you so much merited—I was happy in your presence, but in my solitary hours I blamed myself sharply for having attempted to destroy that

peace which I am bound by the strictest, the tenderest ties of love and honour to preserve. Yet I could not support your indifference, because I feared that I might have unknowingly offended you. Your returning gentleness, however, gave me transports which I had scarce power to conceal.—Thus perpetually tormented by doubts and terror, have I existed since I first had the unspeakable pleasure of being acquainted with you: but, notwithstanding all the misery which I endured, whenever you smiled on me, whenever you honoured me so far as to accept of my endeavours to please you, I felt raptures which I never felt before.—If these raptures must now be at an end, if your happiness or even your pleasure will be promoted by my not seeing you any more in the manner hitherto permitted, till I am authorized by my father to visit you, I submit. I could submit

submit to the stroke of death with cheerfulness, if that stroke would contribute to your felicity.

Here his sighs choaked the powers of utterance, he turned from me and covered his face with his hand.

To tell you what I felt myself is impossible. I only know that I was so much affected that I could not pronounce a single word for a considerable time, though I made several efforts to answer him ; my tears, which I could by no means repell, absolutely defeated all my attempts to speak. He saw my confusion ; he felt all my distress : with the strongest expression in his eyes he looked compassion.

He took my hand, and pressing it to his heart, thus again addressed me.

To love you as I do, Miss Wheatly, with the extremest ardor, and to see you thus distressed merely upon my account almost deprives me of my reason. I will therefore take my leave; since, unhappily circumstanced as I am, my presence only tends to increase your uneasiness. I will not even attempt to lay you under the least restraint: I will not even ask you, continued he, with an heart-piercing sigh which he vainly strove to restrain, to wait for me till happier hours might bless me with your hand. I will leave you free, but I cannot go without declaring to you most solemnly, that no power on earth shall ever prevail on me to think of any other woman, even if I should for ever be deprived of the hopes of your being mine. My absent hours shall be spent in the most fervent wishes and prayers for your felicity. To make you happy would be my supreme delight, but to hear of your  
hap-



happinefs will ever give me no fmall fatisfaction.

He rofe up to go. I ftopped him. I could not bear to be thus out-done in generofity. I fould have blufhed to death, my Annabell, to have let him go, and not to have told him what was alfo my fixed purpofe.

Stay, cried I, looking earneftly at him, ftay Mr. Wentworth, one moment longer, and hear me. If you fincerely mean all which you have faid juft now, I will wait for you, and join my wifhes to yours for happier hours; happier for us both.

I could but juft get out thefe words intelligibly: my emotions were too great to fuffer me to proceed.

I cannot thank you as I ought, replied he, with a voice which difcovered how much he was affected

with what I had said to him; I cannot speak to you Miss Wheatly, but my future life shall be spent in studying to merit this unexpected favour which you have conferred upon me, and which I had not once dared to hope for.

He then pressed my hand to his lips with ardor, and left the room.

I was, I believe, above two hours so lost in thought, that I knew not any thing I was about: but as soon as I began to be a little restored to my senses, I found the two books lying quietly by my side, which Wentworth in the agitation of his mind had forgot to take away with him.—

Will you believe me my Annabell, when I tell you, that I was transported that he had left them: I seized them with delight; they seemed,

ed, in some measure, to console me for his absence, and I determined never to part with them: they were indeed the only things he had ever presumed to present to me, the only things which I had of his, except the little drawing of myself which he had sacrificed to me.

And now, my dearest girl, I have obeyed your kind injunctions, for kindly they were meant, I am well assured. I will not attempt to tell you what my obedience to them has cost me. I must now learn to forget all that has constituted my happiness since I have been in London; of such happiness I had never any idea before, and I expect not to enjoy such felicity again.

Believe me, my dear Miss Grierson, I should be destitute of friendliness indeed, did I not partake of your sorrows and your joys; but till

M 4

you

you send me farther particulars relating to Capt. Wilson, I shall be at a loss to know whether I ought to rejoice at his return. Impatiently, therefore, expecting to hear from you soon,

I remain

Your ever affectionate

L. W.

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L E T T E R XXXIV.

From the same to the same.

**I** AM in the strangest state of dejection, my dear ! I was never in such a state in my life ! nothing gives me any kind of pleasure ! I am utterly incapable of doing any thing, with any spirit ! I begin strongly to fancy  
that

that I have contracted that indolent and odious distemper called the vapours, a distemper of which I am pretty well assured I should have had no symptoms, if my uncle had permitted me to remain at the Abbey.

Lady Julia has spent this day with me. Though I admire the gentleness of her manners, and cannot help feeling something particular for her, in return for the extreme regard with which she distinguishes me, yet there is, if I may be allowed to say so, rather a sameness in her conversation which borders too much upon insipidity;—it appears, at least, insipid to me, in my present melancholy humour.

People may certainly be very modest, very worthy, and very entertaining also, yet how often do we see the most amiable the least entertaining. The lively and agreeable

M 5

are:



are too often destitute of those virtues of which we wish them to be possessors, and the good are frequently so very rigid, and so very dull, that they repress our inclination to love them; we wish, even while we revere their characters, that they would be less severe in their manners, and more lively in their conversation.

I have often thought, that if those who are intrusted with the culture of young minds, or who by their age or station in life ought to be examples to others, knew how to deliver their precepts, and enforce their own excellencies by rendering themselves a little more entertaining, mankind would be more benefited by their behaviour, because their company would be more courted, and their conversation more attended to.—

These reflections naturally bring my dear mother to my memory.  
There

There never was, you and every body who knew her will, I believe, allow what I say to be true, a better woman—a woman who so punctually fulfilled every domestic duty as a christian, a wife, a parent and a friend: yet how lively, how chearful was she, how conversible upon every subject, how ready to contribute to make all those about her like herself.

The best people, as they must certainly be the happiest, should always carry that superiority of felicity about them, if I may be allowed the expression, that they may diffuse it to every person in the company. But what is all this, you will say, to Lady Julia, who, though she does not captivate with her tongue, yet charms with her voice; in singing her execution is very great.

In

In the afternoon Sir Edward Balchen sent up his name. She told me, smiling, that he had made her promise to obtain my leave for him to come and escort her home. I received him as her relation, and he enlivened our conversation, as he is a man of much knowledge, improved by an easy politeness.

When he took his leave he begged that I would suffer him to come now and then, and chat over an author with me, as he discovered that I found leisure to read; a way of employing time not very common among the ladies of his acquaintance.

I made no other reply than a bow—I am not desirous of increasing the number of my men-visitors—and he left me.

When I went into my own apartment to write, just as I got into the  
room,

room, I heard, I thought, a little bustle on the stairs. I looked back, and saw a man going down with a trimmed frock, and his hair in a bag: I heard him say something to my Amy, who was in the passage, and who looked a good deal flurried. I called her in to me. She seemed quite out of breath, and had a violent colour. I staid till she had recovered herself, and then very seriously desired to know the reason of what I had observed.—She looked down and hesitated a little, as if she was ashamed to answer me, and then very freely told me that Sir George Ackland, who had occasionally seen her when he used to come to the house, had always taken a great deal of notice of her, and had lately sent several letters to her by his gentleman, who was the person I saw on the stairs, the last of which contained the offer of a settlement of two hundred a year upon her, if she would go and live

live at a house which he had provided for her; that she had returned the letter unopened to the person who brought it, but that he had fastened her into the room, and forced her to read it, adding persuasions of his own to induce her to comply with his master's proposals; that she had made several attempts to get out of the room but could not, till she heard Lady Julia's carriage driven from the door; and that then, upon her telling him she knew I should come up stairs, he let her out. She ended with saying, that she should have told of Sir George's pestering her so with letters if she had not been quite ashamed.

I blamed her for concealing this affair so long from me, as it might have been attended with more disagreeable consequences; but commended her highly for her behaviour  
to



to Sir George; advising her, however, to be upon her guard.

I also determined to watch her myself; for it is not every country girl who can entirely resist the importunities of a handsome, flattering young fellow, with an offer which would raise her above her present station in life. How much, how very much do I feel for those unhappy girls who, by having a sufficient share of personal charms to catch the attention of men far their superiors in fortune, but as far their inferiors in goodness, are led by vanity, and a youthful fondness for pleasure and show, if no softer passion intervenes, to give up what ought to be their only wealth, their honour and their peace, to those deceivers, who when they have satiated their roving desires, leave them, too often unhappy victims to penury and discontent; or by a paltry settlement (which the poor creatures, ignorant

ignorant and deluded, think a charming acquisition) fill their heads with vanity and pride; till all which they can gain by the miserable prostitution of their persons becomes too little to gratify the capricious and numberless wants of those tyrannic passions.

I have lectured my Amy more than once, in this manner, since the discovery which I have made of her titled lover; and from the attention with which she listens to me, I hope to arm her sufficiently against the attacks of such vile seducers.

My mind is not yet at ease enough, dearest Annabell, to write long letters; besides, I expect every day to hear from you; I cannot, you may believe me, expect your letters without impatience, because they always give a particular pleasure to

Your constantly affectionate

L. W.

L E T T E R XXXV.

Miss GRIERSON to Miss WHEATLY.

**I** AM in so anxious a state of suspense myself, dearest Lucy, that I am hardly capable of saying any thing to cheer your mind, which seems to be greatly depressed.

Your Wentworth has certainly the most striking marks of a most amiable man, I am therefore glad that you have dismissed him. It is better not to trust too much to ones own strength, in love matters, especially when the object is so very pleasing. I commend your resolutely insisting upon a discontinuance of his visits, but your dear, generous heart has shewn rather too much condescension.—You have made a formal promise to wait for him.—Ah! Lucy! you are very far gone indeed. I am  
almost

almost ready to join with Mr. Mordaunt in crying, he will be the man. Be assured, my dear, that I wish from my heart every thing may turn out according to your warmest desires: but I love you too well to be divested of doubts and fears on your account. I should be glad if you could prevail on yourself to quit London, and come down among us. If you cannot leave that enchanting place, look round among your admirers, and see if there is not one able to efface the impression which this Wentworth has made upon your mind.

Who is this Sir Edward Balchen? I don't dislike your description of him. But I know you will say that you have given your promise, and must abide by it.

May you, my sweet Lucy, soon enjoy all the felicity, which, for your noble

noble frankness, and disinterested love,  
you so truly deserve, and for which  
no body wishes with more sincerity  
than

Your ever affectionate

A. G.

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L E T T E R   X X X V I .

Miss WHEATLY to Miss GRIERSON.

**Y**OU ask me about Sir Edward  
Balchen, my dear Annabell: I  
am going to write about him, merely  
to divert you and myself. He is, as  
I have told you before, an agreeable  
young man of fashion, related to  
Lady Julia, and appears to take much  
pleasure in visiting me, for he has  
been here twice since my last. He  
is



is really good company, but think not that he would supplant Wentworth, if I had not bound myself by that formal promise, as you call it. Nothing but a change in Wentworth's morals can occasion a change in my heart; besides, I cannot possibly conceive that Sir Edward has any serious intentions by his civilities to me. A thousand men converse with women without having any such intentions: nay, were I to expect them, they would put an entire stop to the little amusement which his conversation at present affords me. The frequency of his visits only, could make me imagine that he prefers my company to that of any other Lady. He pays me no particular assiduities. Though he frequently lets me know that he thinks I am handsome, and professes to have a high opinion of my understanding and taste, yet in his manner he is totally different from Wentworth

worth and Sir George. The former was always too much touched to express himself in the way he wished, and the latter treated me with a gross kind of flattery which was excessively odious. Sir Edward, on the contrary, behaves to me with an agreeable politeness, which as it pretends to nothing particular, leaves me quite at liberty, and makes me quite easy; so that I certainly chat with him more than with anybody.

I have had some opportunities to ask a few questions about Wentworth, without being thought to have any view by proposing them: but as he left me so determined to come to an explanation of his conduct, as soon as it was in his power, I think it is better to wait for it from himself; besides, Sir Edward has very penetrating looks. I seized the first moment I could find to tell my uncle my resolution with regard to the former

former, but he only replied with a umph, which was accompanied with one of his arch smiles. He has, I suppose, informed my aunt, for she has not taken any notice of his absence; he has not been absent indeed above three or four days.

As I am not obliged to acquaint my aunt with Wentworth's inclination for me, I say nothing to her about it. It will be time enough to acquaint her with it, when it is more public. I don't know why, but I have no great desire to make my aunt a confident. She is so much engrossed by her routs and her parties, that I think she would pay but very little attention to the detail of my love affairs.

I also informed my uncle of Sir George's attacking Amy, and concluded with saying, you see, Sir, I was not much mistaken in my opinion

nion about him. Why, look'ee child, replied he, when I proposed Sir George to you, I did not know that you expected a pattern for chastity in a man who was to be your husband, nor must you expect to find it in any man. If he behaves well to you, it is enough: you have nothing to do with his amours, in my humble opinion.

As I did not chuse to enter upon this subject with my uncle, I left him; though I am sorry to find that he can still be an advocate for a man so devoid of principles as Sir George.

I am very glad, my dearest Annabell, that I have pleased you by resolving not to see Wentworth; but I cannot yet conquer the uneasiness which it has given me, nor shake off that languor which took possession of me at the moment of his departure.—  
How very, very different is he from,  
how

how far superior is he to any other man.

I am concerned also, that your happiness is not so near being accomplished, as I flattered myself it would be, when you informed me of Capt. Wilson's arrival in England. I hope nothing material has happened, which will prevent your union with a man whom you think so deserving of you; if a man can be found who deserves the esteem of my friendly Annabell.

Write immediately, my beloved Miss Grierson, to

Your more than

Ever affectionate

L. W.

L E T-



## L E T T E R XXXVII.

From the same to the same.

**T**HAT horrid Sir George!—I scarce know how to bring myself to write his name;—but I must explain this to you, my dear, as well as my fluttered spirits will let me.

I went up last night to my apartment at the usual hour; but not finding myself at all inclined to rest, I sent Amy to bed, and sat down to read again those books which Wentworth had left behind him. In this way I had amused myself, I believe, for above an hour, when a loud shriek, and a violent bustle over my head, alarmed me. I thought immediately of fire, and my fears of that kind were confirmed, upon my hearing directly people run hastily down stairs, and knock very hard at my door.

As I had not began to undress myself, I opened it immediately, and saw Amy standing at it, with nothing on but her shift and under-petticoat. My good girl, said I, quite frightened, where is the fire ?

There is no fire Madam, said she, trembling all over ; but be so good as to let me come in, and I will tell you every thing. I began to recover my spirits upon hearing that I had been falsely alarmed in one respect, but was astonished and sorry to see my maid in such a condition. Before I could make her tell me the cause of it, I was obliged to give her some drops, to keep her from fainting. I then threw one of my gowns over her shoulders, and desired her to inform me what had happened to her.

When you had told me, Madam, said she, that you had no farther  
occa-

occasion for my attendance to night, I went up stairs, in order to go to bed, and was quite undressed to my petticoat, when I thought I heard a noise in the closet; thinking it might be Mrs. Mordaunt's little dog, who sometimes comes up into my room, because I fondle him, I went to let him out, not caring to have him in my room all night; when, to be sure, Madam, when I opened the door, I thought I should have died with the fright: there stood Sir George: he caught me directly in his arms, before I had power to stir, and offered to stop my mouth; but I screamed aloud, and some of the men hearing me, began to stir upon the stairs, which I suppose he heard, and fearing to be discovered, let me go. I was so ashamed, and so frightened, that I never looked behind, Madam, but ran down to your door, and I hope you will excuse me for thus disturbing you.

My good girl, said I, don't talk of disturbing me, but thank Heaven for preserving you from so vile a man. You shall stay in my room to night, for I fear some person in the house has assisted him in concealing himself in the closet; it will not therefore be safe for you to go up again: but, as the house is alarmed, I will ring for one of the maids to bring your cloaths down, and you shall sleep with me. I did accordingly, as I said I would, and one of the house maids appeared. I looked at her rather sternly, and bade her go into Amy's room, and bring all her things to me. After she had obeyed my directions, I fastened my door, and told the poor trembling girl that she might go to bed; but she very modestly begged me to excuse her, saying, that she was not at all tired, and that she was sure she could not sleep.—She then put on her cloaths, and we both passed the night in our chairs.

I questioned her very closely, but could get no farther intelligence about this vile affair than what I have related; only she told me, that one of the footmen had often joked with her about her being admired by Sir George, though, at the same time, he pretended to like her himself, and had lately, she thought, been very impertinent in persuading her to listen to the former; giving hints, that if she would be more obliging to Sir George, he should not like her the worse, as he would marry her after all; because he knew that Sir George would then do handsomely by them both.

By this account it appeared plainly to me that this fellow was employed by Sir George, and that it was he who had conducted him to this place of concealment.

It was natural to imagine that my  
uncle and aunt would, in the morn-  
N 3 ing,



ing, be desirous to know the cause of all this disturbance; I therefore related to them every circumstance concerning it, and concluded with intreating my uncle to discharge the suspected servant.

My uncle, who began at first to look with one of his smiles, now put on a very solemn countenance. My aunt was also serious, and seemed to be greatly surprized; but Miss Blonden appeared, by turns, as red as scarlet, and as pale as ashes.—Finding that I observed her, she rose up and went to the window, pretending to read the news-paper.

When Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt had asked a few questions relating to this affair, which I answered as circumstantially as I could, repeating at the same time my request with regard to the discharge of the footman, we finished our breakfast; and then my  
uncle;

uncle, going into his library, ordered his man to attend him. Returning soon afterwards, he told us, that, upon his calling up the fellow, he had taxed him with having connived with Sir George Ackland, who, he supposed, had bribed him for his assistance in seducing my servant, and charged him, as he valued his place, to tell the truth. The man, continued my uncle, deceived by this, thought, that if he exposed Sir George I would forgive him, very freely declared that Sir George had offered, in case he could any way procure Mrs. Amy for him, of whom he said he should be tired in a fortnight, to take care of them both, by marrying them. I therefore very fairly told him, that I left him to Sir George's protection, assuring him that I should dismiss him from my service. After I had thus lectured him, I paid him off.

I thanked my uncle for doing this piece of justice at my request, in terms  
which

which sufficiently proved how much he had obliged me.

Why aye, Lucy, said he, to be sure, as your maid met with an affront in my house, I ought to resent it: but John was a very handy fellow, always ready at his business; and if I was to turn away every servant who likes a pretty girl, I should soon, I believe, be left to wait upon myself. I don't know how you all come to be so un-fullied in D—shire, but, upon my soul, these things, in town, happen every day, and there is no notice taken of them.

So much the worse, Sir, said I; that is the reason why they are so frequent, and why men are not ashamed of them. If every person expressed a detestation of such crimes, people would be more careful how they perpetrated them.

I don't know that, said he ; I believe if people are ever so much offended with them, men will have wenches in spite of their teeth.

I was, I own, quite shocked to hear my uncle treat thus lightly an action which was altogether of so villainous a nature. I could not help saying, I doubt not, Sir, but that you would be the first to condemn a common highwayman, and load him with the most opprobrious appellations you could think of: and how infinitely more criminal is the man who attempts to seduce an innocent girl, because he is a man of fortune, a man of rank. You look upon such behaviour as quite trifling, of no consequence, or indeed entirely becoming that rank, while honour and justice, which ought to induce him to protect the virtue which he attempts to destroy, are entirely disregarded.

Here

Here Harriet, who had listened to our little debate, seemingly with great impatience, tossed up her head, and said, that men of fashion certainly were above troubling themselves about the reputation of such low creatures as servant girls, and that the girls generally began first.

That girls in all stations of life do sometimes begin first, Miss Blonden, said I, with a very grave face, I am very ready to believe; but I think I may venture to affirm that Amy is not one of them: and if men of fashion are such detestable creatures as you represent them to be, I shall always desire to avoid any connections with them, as they must be entirely destitute of those principles, which in my opinion constitute a man of honour, who will never permit any person, in any station, to suffer on his account, especially any person in a station wherein a character is of the most consequence.

As



As I delivered this speech rather warmly, Harriet only coloured, and made up a lip at me. My aunt was so intent upon looking over an heap of cards which the servant had just brought to her, and which were of the utmost importance to her, as they contained invitations and appointments to routs, immediately to be answered; so that she had scarce attended to our conversation, which my uncle seemed rather inclined to drop: but when I found my aunt at leisure, I desired that Amy might have a little bed made for her in a closet which joined to my chamber, and she did not think proper to refuse my request.

Are you not surprized, my Annabell, that my uncle who was always esteemed by my dear mother, and intrusted by her with the care of her only child, should think so slightly about matters of the highest importance

( 276, )

tance to our happiness both here and hereafter. Indeed, my dear, it is this loose way of treating such matters, which cannot be too seriously considered, that makes the generality of people so bad as they are: and while the lower sort of people look up to those in the highest ranks of life, who are infamous in their conduct, with envy and emulation, it is no wonder that they are so corrupt.

Adieu, my dearest friend. I am very impatient for a letter,

And am, as usual,

Your ever affectionate



L. W.

END of the first VOLUME.

